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DAWN IN IRELAND

BY

MARIE HARRISON

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FOREWORD

WRITING a book about Ireland at this time is necessarily an adventurous business. So much is happening so swiftly. The position changes not from month to month, but from day to day, and with the change in position there is a consequent change in the nature and power of the forces at work in the country. Indeed, it might be held that a book written in April would be out of date in June and hopelessly obsolete in August.

But behind all that is transitory there remain certain permanent things. It is with affairs in Ireland as with the waves of the sea which amid all their transformations remain the same in substance, obedient to the same forces. This book has been made as an attempt to indicate some of the enduring facts and forces which underlie the appearance of Ireland to-day. Puzzled by endless apparent contradictions, observers are tempted at times to yield to hopelessness, and to declare that they can never understand the ways of that beautiful, perplexing land. Ireland

herself is bewildered, and does not grasp the fact of the goodwill which exists so powerfully in Great Britain, and in her doubt and distress the words of those who speak for her grow more confusing.

I have tried to describe some of the things concerning which there can be no confusion, to point to certain facts which no amount of misguided eloquence can change, to discover the interior sentiment which, blossoming in so distracting a fashion, is still the same. I have claimed that love of Ireland is in the last resort the force which drives all her children to speech and action, and I have endeavoured to show how considerable is British good-will towards Ireland. The events of the last fortnight have illustrated in the most dramatic manner these two facts.

There was first the great work of Irish regiments in the attack on the Messines Ridge, and the death of that most gallant soldier, Major William Redmond; and secondly, there was the unconditional release of the Sinn Fein prisoners, condemned to varying terms of imprisonment by courts-martial in consequence of their share in the Dublin rebellion. Major Redmond left it on record that he was fighting for Ireland, that he died for Ireland. Speaking from beyond the grave he has insisted on this. He fell wounded, and men of Ulster carried him away, so that in his death he became, as it were, a sacrament of that

strong unity which underlies all the apparent discord between the Protestant North and the Catholic South, that unity which shall in time submerge the clamour of the politicians.

No one can doubt that the men who were held in prison at Lewes were also fervent lovers of Ireland. Their vision of the way by which salvation might come to their dear land was exactly opposite to that of Major Redmond, but they shared his inspiration, and now by their release the British Government have demonstrated beyond all question the sincerity of their desire for the peace of Ireland, their understanding of the changeless will of the Irish to assert and establish their nationhood for all time. And the generous appreciations of the work of the Irish divisions on June 7 have testified eloquently of the value we place upon Ireland's aid in the war.

To-day there is not a battle zone where the Irish have not fought with us against the common foe; Irish prisoners of war in Germany rejected with scorn all attempts to persuade them to take up arms against us. These are not words; they are deeds, and they have a major eloquence.

Looking not so much at what Ireland says as at what Ireland does, it is impossible not to hope that a brighter future is dawning. What may happen between this day on which I write and the time when this book will be published I can-

not tell, but I am confident that at no distant period all will be well. It is in the hope that others may share this confidence, that they may learn to seek and to trust the permanent things, and to continue working for the full and final radiance in the face of all discouragement, that this little book has been written.

MARIE HARRISON.

June, 1917.

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CHAPTER I

THE FOLK OF THE ROCKS

ON a bleak day in late February an official of the Congested Districts Board came to Dungloe, in the far north-west of Donegal, to sell a little space of arable land to the people of the rocks. The soil, which had been acquired from a private owner, was rich in the promise of development. It was wedged in between barren stretches of rock-strewn turf-land out of which these amazing Irish people have somehow made their living. On a first reflection, you would imagine that such an offer would have brought a sense of relief and eager expectation to the district. The land, at its best, produces crops barely sufficient for eight months in the year. There are no trees beneath whose kindly shade man and beast may find shelter from sun and rain. The piercing winds that are driven inland from the wild Atlantic sea beat with unchecked fury round the little white homesteads. Roads are merely stony tracks trailing across the miles of sodden turf.

There is the sea, cutting into the land like a lake; and the misty line of hills with their shadowed pools beneath, and, in the autumn, the glow of the heather in bloom. But as far as the eye travels across the brown bogland is a grey network of stones with unending centres of enormous rocks that might have been flung down in unreasoning hatred from the hand of some god of the clouds. These rocks stand as a perpetual challenge to the ingenuity, and the tenacity, and the faith of the people.

Most of the holdings, averaging five acres in extent, are worth about ten shillings a year. The inspector addressed himself to one of the crofters. He pointed out the gracious splendour of the new land, its wonderful possibilities . . . the price was absurdly little.

But the dweller on the rocks shook his head. He looked round at his whitewashed cottage and his two acres, ploughed with infinite care between the fragments of rock that still remained.

"No," he said, slowly, "I've blasted the rocks out of my bit of land, and I've built fires round them to loosen their grip on the soil. The blood and sweat of my hands are in those two acres. Sure, I couldn't be leaving it, sir. Your bit of land would be too easy."

So these homesteads tell the story of an unending battle against great forces, of men who have at the last conquered the land, making it yield food for at least a space of the year, till

they have indeed become a part of the earth itself. It is here in this land of strange loveliness and of great desolation that has been born one of the most inspiriting, honestly democratic movements of the day. But there is first another story to tell—the story of the women of Donegal.

In a land giving so little sustenance the women have to toil. Theirs has always been the task of knitting. Their work is justly famed. With deft, patient fingers they made in the years that are gone knitted articles that were sold in the little town of Glenties. So fair a place—but its very name stinks in the nostrils of men and women who hate oppression. For this was the great centre of the knitting industry, and it was here that young girls and old women were paid prices as shameless as those of the darkest slums of the East End of London. It was reckoned rare good fortune to make as much as one and fourpence for a dozen pairs of socks; one penny per pair was the price of gloves. There are men in Dungloe to-day who will tell you with flaming bitterness how their mothers walked the sixteen miles to Glenties with their small stock of goods, how they were paid not in coin of the realm but in kind, how they returned heart-sick, footsore, and faint across the hills with a few yards of calico or flannel as the price of their months of toil. Then, with their fresh supply of wool their hands would become busy once more. . . . Their men-folk fighting nature had less to fear and suffer

than these women who fought with feeble strength the iron system on which the gombeener grew rich and richer as the days went by.

But this was but a part of the gombeen man's systemized campaign of destruction. In his ordinary activities the gombeener is still the curse of Ireland. He is a greater curse than an unjust landlord, a wicked British Government, a selfish farmer, or a domineering priest. Once caught in the net of the gombeener the people are impotent and doomed. Supreme in almost every village, he heaps up great fortunes from his sway over men and women who would otherwise be happy, thrifty and independent.

The gombeener begins in a small way of trade. He offers unlimited credit. Some fresh innocent girl-bride, knowing for the first time the joys of spending money on the upkeep of a new home, comes as a stranger to the district. She offers silver as she makes her purchases at the gombeen shop.

"Come now, Mrs. O'Flaherty," says the gombeener persuasively, "it wouldn't be asking your cash I'd be after at all, at all, and you just married, and making a home. Don't I know your husband is one of the best workers in all the countryside? They do say he is mighty clever with his tools. Pay when you like—maybe you'll find it convenient to have a little account here."

The young wife hesitates—and yields. She becomes as the rest of the villagers. In the taking

of that first step she has sold her liberty, and the liberty of the little ones she will hold at her breast, to the greatest enemy of her country. The bill at the gombeen shop grows and grows until the interest she owes is as much as the cost of the goods themselves. In other shops she sees flour cheaper by a shilling for the seven stones, but she dare not buy it. Across the way is a baby's frock that might be hers for a trifling sum, but in the gombeen shop she buys a little garment, less serviceable, for which she is charged almost double. Were she to transfer her custom the gombeener would demand an instant settlement of his exorbitant bill, and the wife and her husband and her children would be ruined. And when in the end death comes as a great release, the debts of all the years are handed down in heritage to the children, who in turn become the gombeener's slaves.

Well-to-do people in Ireland get most of their dry foodstuffs from Dublin or London stores, because they refuse to pay the excessive prices at the local shops. Even in those rare shops which are not actually gombeen in method, the owners charge what they like. By questioning every item on a bill it is possible to obtain something approximate to fair dealing, but the poor are too proud to do so, if they are not too frightened. So you have the tragic picture of the agricultural labourer paying more for his tea and his sugar than his employer.

I was told by the commandant of a certain big camp who had occasion to hire a motor from time to time that even in dealing with strangers the gombeener adds so much extra to a bill in the hope that it will escape notice and be paid. To this soldier there came a bill for £1 2*s*. 6*d*., which should have been 13*s*. 6*d*. The man was challenged. He merely shrugged his shoulders. "Is it a mistake?" he said indifferently. On a similar occasion the car-owner genially remarked: "Oh, now, I'm not sure whether you had the rides or not, sir, but pay what you like."

When such flagrant attempts are made to victimize the wealthy who could afford to pay, it will be realized that the poor have not the ghost of a chance in dealing with these unscrupulous tradesman.

I know of gombeeners who hear Mass and receive Holy Communion every day. Such men are not consciously insincere. They will even tell you that they are the real friends of the poor, and how in bad years they gave the people credit and saved them from the workhouse. These men are always the most ready to denounce landlordism and to make great noises about English tyranny. They are eager to divert attention from the system which to their unseeing eyes is not opposed to the elements of Christian teaching, but which they must know militates cruelly against the welfare of the country.

Moreover, the gombeen man is seldom anxious

to be paid in cash. His money is made on the interest he charges, and it is not to his profit to have old debts wiped off the slate.

Dungloe is a little village of one long untidy street of cottages and shops. The nearest town by rail is Londonderry, sixty-eight miles away. Travelling on the Londonderry and Lough Swilly Railway is not encouraged. On making the journey from Dungloe to Derry in the early dusk of a winter's day I came in a carriage in which the lamps were unlit and which had no communication cord. It took six hours to do the journey. The engines were worn out and the goods vans were piled with heavy merchandise, and there were profoundly irritating stoppages.

"I hope now we won't be spending the night in the mountains," one woman sighed. It often happened, she explained, and I was given to understand that if you wished to arrive at a certain place on a Saturday night you would be wise to take Friday's train. I tell of these things because they have all to do with the reign of the gombeener. It is inevitable that in a district so isolated, in a village with communications to the outside world so slow and so uncertain, the gombeen man should be all powerful. I cannot imagine a district in all Ireland where it must have been more difficult to give the death-blow to the credit system. But it has been done; the first great independent co-operative effort that is the beginning of the movement which will

save Ireland was initiated here by the genius of one man.

Patrick Gallagher, whose parents still live, remembers the days when his mother tramped to Glenties. He remembers, too, the day when as a little boy of nine he stood in the town of Strabane waiting to be hired. Here he found work for six months, during which time he earned three pounds. Till the age of seventeen he was hired continually by various employers. Then he went to Scotland, sending almost all his earnings to the gombeen man. Only by journeying across the sea to England or Scotland was it possible for these crofters to earn enough to pay off some of the debts of years. The men toiled at the harvests, and young girls, innocent as a little babe, went to Perthshire to dig potatoes, with city workers, for twelve hours a day. They, too, sent home their meagre money at the insistent call of the gombeener.

As Patrick Gallagher grew to manhood there came to him the resolve that one day the system that had brought shame and agony to the people of his dear land should be swept away for always. It was a fine resolve and a brave resolve. Here was a man possessing all the natural qualities of leadership but without experience in the business affairs of the world. To attempt to conquer the very men who had themselves conquered the people was an effort which few democratic leaders in England would have cared to make. But

Gallagher had before him the picture of the wounded womanhood of Donegal; of children with a legacy of sorrow; of strong men beaten and cowed to the ground. The great blaze of his hatred of injustice never smouldered, but found its first tangible expression in a little meeting round a peat fire in 1905.

Here, with a few friends, he talked of the possibility of founding a co-operative stores where the crofters and their women-folk might start afresh, getting goods at low prices for cash payment. The only capital was the loyalty, the intelligence and the boundless enthusiasm which Mr. Gallagher inspired. But it was sufficient. In a very short period the movement had so progressed that forty-six shares were taken in what was christened the Templecrone Co-operative Agricultural Society, and a committee was duly appointed. The chief aim of the Society was to supply manure, seed, and other agricultural needs. In the opening of 1906, all that the organization had as a centre was a small room in a disused house about six miles from Dungloe. The store was open two nights a week, and its success was instantaneous.

Opposition was also instantaneous. Derry, the natural source of supplies, was coerced by the gombeeners into refusing to supply goods, and the Society were obliged to go to a Scotch co-operative body for friendly aid. But this industrial opposition merely acted as a stimulant to action.

The success of the sale of agricultural necessities led to the opening of a general store, which began to supply tea, sugar, meal and flour.

That was a day of revelation to the women. It was worth while to tramp along the hill-sides to reach the funny little store where they could buy their foodstuffs cheaper than in the village shops. The price of flour tumbled abruptly from twelve shillings to nine shillings a bag. The gombeen men became alarmed once more. They refused to buy eggs from any member of the Co-operative Society. The Society was quick in retaliation; it sold eggs for its members with such success that within a week the price had risen by twopence a dozen. The gombeeners made a desperate move and there came the edict that whatever the Society paid, they would pay more. . . .

It so happened that Mr. Gallagher was in Derry at the time on the business of the Society. He returned to Dungloe immediately, bringing with him a van which he promptly set forth to collect eggs in every direction. The price mounted still higher, the fund created by the gombeeners was exhausted, and the efforts of the Society were so successful that it was able to move into Dungloe and open a shop with splendid defiance in the village street itself.

To-day in Dungloe the gombeener still exists, but his power is surely waning. The people regard Mr. Gallagher as a great man, as indeed

he is ; popularly he is called " Paddy the Cope," the latter in symbolism of the Society. As soon as the stores became a firm success, he found it possible to lend money to some of the victims of the gombeener so that debts might be paid off. Many of the farmers round about know, for the first time in the history of their families, the joyous freedom which comes when the great burden of debt is finally removed with a new epoch in dawn. To them the name of Patrick is indeed a blessed word.

At the stores the farmer can get anything he wants, from a tin of fertilizer to a new hat. The Society sells his pigs or cures them and gets good prices for bacon ; it packs his eggs and disposes of them to the best advantage. It undertakes to sell anything that he wishes to put into the market, and the business of the organization has so increased that its last yearly turnover was something like forty thousand pounds.

But " Paddy the Cope " was not content to bring about a new way of living for men-folk only. Remembering the days of his mother's toil, he determined to provide happy, well-paid work for the girls and young women of the country.

It happened some time ago that the Countess of Pembroke offered half a dozen halls to the Irish Agricultural Organization Society for the use of the most deserving lonely villages. Dungloe was offered a hall, and gratefully accepted.

It was used for lectures and dances and other harmless amusements. But again there was opposition from the gombeen kingdom. The local clergy appear to have joined them in frowning on the hall. In an incredibly short time the "bosses" built a rival hall in the village which won the blessing of the priests, and rather than continue to run his recreation room in opposition to the clergy Mr. Gallagher decided that in an adaptation of the building might be found a way out for the women.

It was that Jesuit priest of great brilliance and understanding, Father Finlay, who gave Mr. Gallagher the helping hand he so greatly needed. Father Finlay saw at once that the installation of knitting machines would provide work for a considerable number of girls. In June of 1915 the first machine was put up, and as the general affairs of the Society progressed, more and more machines were added until a hundred and forty happy workers are now employed.

It has been my business from time to time to visit factories in England where girls are working. But I have not at any time seen a building where the workers are as pretty, as contented, and as well paid as at Dungloe. With the exception of a few hands who are on time and who finish at seven o'clock after a free meal, the workers are at their machines from 8.30 till 5.30, with an hour off for midday dinner. The hall, which will soon be too small for the growing number of

employees, is lit by electricity. It is light and very airy. Winds from the sea blow in from the open windows on the girls as they stand or sit at their work in frocks of bright primitive colours.

The average wage is over a pound a week on piece work. In factories in prosperous Belfast women think themselves lucky to get thirteen shillings a week. Here in Dungloe a clever girl can readily make a couple of pounds.

"Do you mind telling me how much you got last week?" I asked one girl beautiful in her black hair and in the depths of her grey eyes.

"Not at all," she responded eagerly; "it was two pounds ten."

I chanced on another worker. Ten weeks before she had come as a learner, making eight shillings in her first week. "It was one pound six last pay day," she told me proudly. Three sisters, on the same day, took home £4 15s. between them. All along the way it was the same happy story. . . .

It happened that afterwards I was waylaid by a gombeener who insinuated that such figures were manufactured, that these girls really made but a few shillings a week. . . . The answer is in the pay-sheets which are kept with careful detail. They are open to the inspection of all interested visitors.

Is there any reason why the girls should not be well paid? There are no employers to demand big profits. The profits that accrue go to the

the factory, to the maintenance of the the provision of dividends, but pri- the payment of first-rate wages. Mr. ets no pecuniary benefit beyond a fixed e. If the factory had been the pro- profit-making business man lower wages would have been paid, for in a district where there are so few chances of employment it would have been easy enough to engage workers at half the wages given to the Society's girls.

But because it is all a co-operative scheme, the workers get the first benefits. Here in the land where the women once wept tears of bitter sorrow, where even the blessed consolations of religion were powerless to mend broken hearts or heal a shattered faith—here there is a great peace and a great happiness. The girls are joyous to see in the colour and radiance of their perfect health. They are well shod and comfortably dressed. They are quick in intelligence and courteous in manner. They have no desire for the artificial attractions of town life. Their pleasure is in bringing comfort to the homestead, in helping their brothers and their fathers, in watching the country grow rich and contented.

Their work at the machines is very good. Were it not so, Mr. Gallagher himself could not keep the factory alive. But it has been a magnificent commercial success. I saw a letter from a Manchester firm giving an order for £5,000 worth of gloves. After two big contracts completed for

the Belgian Government, a third is in process of fulfilment. Last year a big order for the In Army was executed. Firms in England k the worth of these Donegal goods. May it hap that one day each article will bear in additi to the words "British Made" a distinctive Irish trade-mark so that the fame of the little village may spread afar.

The money paid out in wages finds its way into the stores again, for the girls are great customers of the Society, banking their money or getting useful boots and clothes at the shop. If it so happens that some desired object is not in stock, the knitting girl willingly waits until the Society can get it for her rather than visit the accursed gombeener.

This great movement, as I have indicated, has been accomplished without the help of the clergy of the immediate district. It is typical of the new independence of the Irish people, Catholic to the end in heart and action, but independent of the priesthood on the practical ways of life. During the holding of a special Lenten mission at the church in Dungloe, Mr. Gallagher started the day's work at a much later hour than usual so that the girls might attend the morning services. But the most heated opposition from that narrow-minded section of the clergy that exists in every church would be powerless to extinguish his burning spirit of progression or to water down his great enthusiasm.

I look upon "Paddy the Cope"—this middle-aged man in his workman's clothes, with his reddish moustache and kindly eyes, and a voice so soft and gentle—as one of the leaders of the age. No measure of that home government that has been so long delayed could have done as much in North-West Donegal as the enterprise of this man and his loyal band of followers. Very surely he is a token of the new spirit of the land—the spirit that is concerning itself less with political abstractions than with the practical every-day fellowship which is the only way to enduring contentment.

CHAPTER II

THE HAPPY HARBOUR

CRITICS who are apt to talk loudly about England's indifference to the Sister Isle should come to Downings and see how Government money with the help of a Government department has changed the whole face of the countryside. The chief centre of the Irish herring fishery, Downings is a little harbour in the north of Donegal. Twenty years ago the only boats in use on all the Donegal coast were curraghs—rickety relations of the coracle of the Ancient Britons. To-day the harbour is busy with sturdy luggers that put far out to sea and come back with triumphant catches, and with the intensely modern motor-boats which do their work so swiftly and completely that the fishermen themselves marvel.

The curragh, which in improved form is still in use in South-West Ireland, is almost extinct on the Donegal coast. But at Downings there remains an old fisherman who would not part with his curragh for the gold of the world. His

curious craft took me out to sea one rough winter's day. There were sun-glints on the waves, but the sea was stormy and restless, and out towards the open Atlantic it seemed to me to be dangerous water for such a little boat. She had cost not a penny more than thirty shillings. In shape she was exactly like a church window —gracefully arched at the bow, but straight at the stern. The frame was simply trellised woodwork, such as one sees in a garden, very light in texture ; the outer covering was canvas, and the equipment one solitary paddle. Deep and roomy, she looked like an enormous basket, and though without seats she was perfectly comfortable. To the inexperienced it would seem that at any moment she might turn a somersault, but under the guidance of the young man with the paddle she flitted with acrobatic ease from one wave top to another, and it was extraordinary how, after the first putting out, came the sensation of utter safety and confidence.

These curraghs are seaworthy enough and safe in the hands of a seasoned fisherman, and in many parts of Ireland where there are no natural or artificial harbours, they are the only possible boats, since they can be landed in strands or little creeks in the rocks. But the lightness of the curragh, which makes for safe launching in fair weather, adds to the difficulty of landing in a storm, especially when there is a good take of fish on board.

All along the coast-line women have watched and waited during the ages for the men who have set out to sea in the coming darkness of the night. Their white houses gathering round about the bogland or sand dunes by Downings are ten miles from a station. The soil might be persuaded to yield richer measures of food, but the way to the railway is a long, long road, too long to make the sale of butter or eggs or oats a profitable undertaking. On the quality of the herring season depends the comfort of the homesteaders during the greater part of the year.

Great-hearted, gallant souls, these fishermen. The wildest seas made little difference to their courage. The cry of their women could not keep them back; they were born of the sea and the call of their mother was unendingly in their ears. On the roughest night there was scarcely a lingering look at the little lights of home shining through the blackness. To fight storms and make the sea give of its food was their ordinary daily business. They were utterly unconscious of the romance or of the heroism in this their accustomed way of living. And the watching women would tell their beads by the turf fires, shuddering as great gusts of wind shook the cottages. . . . Came to them the memories of men who had been drowned, and their voices were raised in pitiful supplication to the Blessed Virgin that the fragile curraghs and their crews might come safe to port at the last.

After a bad season there were sorrow and hunger in the land. The men had to adventure forth into other worlds in search of work. The women waited, tilling the soil at home, or spinning the hemp that would re-cover the boat before it set out for its next conflict with the sea.

The psychology of men who live by the sea is a fascinating study. It is also an explanation of much that perplexes. There was little security of life for these fisherfolk in the day of the curragh. The man who battles with the primary forces of nature, who fights on the sea for fish, who toils on the land to grow food, must inevitably be different in moral fibre from the worker of the town who is concerned with machinery and the things which men have made. To the dweller by the sea comes a certain rugged strength of character, but also a grim fatalism and greater aloofness from the ways of the modern world, especially when, as in the case of the men who sail from Downings, he lives so far from that world.

Creeslough, which is the station for Carrigart, the nearest village to Downings, is thirty-nine miles from Londonderry, and a train of infinite leisure carried me over those miles in exactly three and a half hours. And Creeslough itself is eight miles by road from Carrigart.

There is poetry and symbolism in the very name of Creeslough, which is in Gaelic craos-loch, the gluttonous lake, the lake that swallows everything. But the station is not poetic. It is as

much a poultry run as a place where trains set out and arrive. I imagine that in summer-time, when the far-famed Rosapenna golf links bring sportsmen from all over the country, the hens may be invited to retire. In winter-time they saunter about the platform in lazy unconcern. They give a note of homeliness to the district, but they do not suggest enterprise or efficiency.

Letters are carried to Carrigart on a mud-caked weary side-car. With his Britannic Majesty's mails as a back rest, I was one of the three passengers who made the eight-mile journey quite cheerily. Indeed, who would not be happy to pass through this lovely land? Dusk was veiling the countryside. Sinister in its blackness the great hill of Muckish kept sentinel over the land. It was splashed with snow and its shadows fell softly on the little hills around, on the rough moorland and on the trout streams with their crude stone bridges. Broken hedges of stone bordered the moors on either side of the road, which was serried as if by plough by the passage of a hundred herring carts. It was the broken road that gave the first indication of the change in the land.

Not half-way to Carrigart the jarvey pulled up his horse and made for "Hannah's"—the kindly-faced woman who supplies weary travellers with whisky. He took with him the two other passengers, and their laughter drifted through the darkening air as I waited on the car.

It was good to wait. Leading a shaggy pony homewards, a little girl passed with a gentle "Good night to ye." Behind her came a man and woman with sacks of turf flung over their shoulders. Lights in the sky were changing constantly. Gold spots gleamed from the windows of homesteads as lamps were lit. The silhouette of Muckish became less distinct, the last pink flush from sunset faded away. But there was a great silver light on the waters of the inland sea, and there was music in the tramp of men seeking home after the day's toil.

The jarvey and his fellows returned, and the rest of the way we talked, as people talk in these hours of chance companionship. The next day after a night's sleep in Carrigart, I went on to Downings, two and a half miles away, the place where something very like a miracle has been worked by a Government department, the Congested Districts Board.

It is a new small harbour, very busy and immensely pleased with itself. It is such a lonely little place, set at the edge of a vast lake of sea water lined by hills of all shapes and colours. Not so many years ago the crofters looked out from their peepholes towards the climbing, sharp-edged shadow of Muckish, with the distant rise of Mount Errigal far beyond, and at the curraghs coming and going about their business, but they saw no activity of life, nor did they experience the exhilaration of crowds. To-day they may

look at the harbour, as I looked, with its sail-boats and motor-boats all squabbling together for room by the pier; they may see the great hauls of herrings shaken out of the nets; they may watch the quick passage of men and women moving from the pier to one of the big curing sheds that have been put up, or they may hear the raucous voices of men from England bidding against each other for herrings for America. That America should want fish from such a little harbour is to them the greatest miracle of all.

In the earlier days of the Board's work at Downings share ownership was the custom. The Board owned the boats with the fishing gear, receiving a share of the men's earnings. The system was established in order to encourage the men of the curraghs to fish in decked boats, under the skilled care of Scotch instructors. But as the fisherfolk became expert in the management of the new craft the Board wisely decided that undivided ownership by the men would be much more stimulating. The curragh was at least the man's unquestioned property. It was fitting that he should be assisted to transfer his responsibilities and all the pride of possession to the lugger. Although a beginning on a share basis was necessary, the final end of the Board's work—the creation of a self-supporting happy and independent fishing industry—was perpetually in view.

After a few seasons of fishing by the new

methods the men found that they were saving money. Ten years ago the season began in August and ended in the following month, but now it has been enormously extended, and the heaviest catches are made between the new year and the end of March. Directly these changed conditions had enabled them to accumulate funds the fisher folk were encouraged to buy their own boats. Some purchased them outright; others paid down a part of the price, leaving the balance to be paid in half-yearly instalments.

As an example of the earning capacity of a first-class motor-boat here is the splendid record of the *Daylight Star*. From January 16 to February 21 she made over £1,000. These figures are an amazement to the men and women who remember the land as it was twenty years ago.

The *Daylight Star* was bought from the Board in September of last year at a cost of £850. In these days of submarine activity she is worth at least £2,000. The first payment of £200 was made at the time of purchase, with ten years in which to pay the balance in half-yearly instalments. Six of the crew are responsible for these payments. The remaining two, a strange driver and a hired man, have no financial interest in the craft. But the takings have been divided into thirteen shares, each man getting one share, leaving five shares with which to pay off the debt.

Owned by half a dozen men who paid cash for

it at the outset, a pretty little sail-boat made a great record in a little over a month—January 17 to February 23—in earning over £700. In the preceding two weeks no fish at all had been taken. But the modern boat, unlike the curragh, can catch fish while the sea is good, and bring home mighty hauls that would have sent a lightly-built craft to the bottom. They are indeed romantic figures, telling as they do of great good fortune—£500, £307, £361, and so on, in very short periods of time. My friend of the curragh made £10 with his haul of skate in a couple of hours, but had he owned a bigger and a better boat he would have made infinitely more.

There was great activity at the pierhead as I stood there watching. Buyers from all over the kingdom were bidding keenly for herrings. Thousands are cured and sent to American markets in normal times, but in war days there is a big cry for fish for the fresh markets at home. Men who remember the days of the famine looked down proudly at their rich hauls. Big prices were paid for fresh herrings. Curers with sheds built in the neighbourhood claimed their share, and supplies were so plentiful that all the fisherfolk were able to retain as much produce as they wanted for their own consumption during the year instead of selling the whole of their catch.

The buyers have a bitter tale to tell of delays on the railway, which is utterly inadequate to the needs of the district. It is stupid at a

time that food should be wasted in a land where there is so little variety of sustenance. In war-time it is criminal. At the station herrings were rotting through lack of railway organization. One commercial man spent the greater part of the day in Carrigart in writing piteous letters to various officials in England in the hope that their hearts might be touched. However, the fisher folk themselves are not the sufferers. Theirs is to fish and sell; the rest of the business is not their concern.

The activities of the Board do not cease with the provision of boats. There is an excellent shed at Downings where the men may buy paint or rope nets at wholesale prices. They would have far to go in search of tackle were it not for these well-equipped stores—friend alike of the man who wants canvas with which to repair his curragh or of the fisherman-engineer who talks learnedly about the ways of his motor-boat.

During the herring season there is plenty of work for the girls. The herrings have to be salted and packed carefully into barrels. It is wet but not unpleasant work. In oilskin aprons and red or green or purple shawls the girls stand at the barrels with all the winds and rains of heaven blowing about them, singing at their work with merry indifference, and taking home good money at the coming of eventide. They are deeply appreciative of the refreshment-room which the Board has put up for them—a cheery, airy

place where they can buy tea or soup or bread and butter or cake for trifling sums.

Coal is three pounds a ton and dry foodstuffs are expensive, but this is a prosperous bit of the green land. With the success of the herring season there is plenty of money in the homesteads, and during the months of the present year there will be no want of comforts.

And these changes—are they altering the character of the people? Very gradually, I think.

At Carrigart there is a notice outside the police station to the effect that recruiting inquiries will be answered, but there have been very few men seeking information, and it is not difficult to understand why it should be so. These fisher-folk through all the years have been in daily contact with the most concentrated expressions of the concrete. Those old and terrible days are not so very remote; this happy prosperity is still a new thing.

They were not in the past of the type of which dreamers and politicians are fashioned. Their enthusiasm was centred on the effort to live, and the less immediate business of winning self-government did not interest them, for before you can demand home rule you must be conscious of some kind of a national life that can be ordered, regulated and improved. If the Donegal fisher-man had been more certain of life itself and of comfort to surround their years they might have

been great politicians. They are changing to-day, but they are still to some extent the men of twenty years ago. They would fight to the death if their homesteads were attacked, but the imagination which can find music in the sound of the sea and perceive the beauty of the brown land and the splendour of the great skies is not necessarily the imagination which can respond to an impersonal ideal, to the call of an abstract principle of justice.

The Empire, kingship, and the rights of little nations are almost meaningless words to men whose share in the Empire has not been, till recent years, the right to eat when hungry, to rest when tired, to play in happy recreation. But the change and the opportunities have come at last.

In their train follows the change in the hearts and minds of the people. Already the commercial prosperity has kindled the torch of an awakened nationality that is lighting up the countryside. The men may be less gracious in manner than those of the South, but they are more staunch, more worthy of trust. To the stray visitor they may appear taciturn and reticent. But it is not in the nature of the best sort of men to be too readily at ease in Zion. For many years to come the men and women of Donegal will bear on their faces the scars that were inflicted in remembered times of sorrow and of hunger. But there is the dawn of hope in their hearts. They are con-

scious for the first time that their country, so rich in spiritual and natural splendour, is a land wherein they may dwell in material comfort. The coming of civilization in the shape of commercial men who talk to them of the wider world beyond at the end of the day's work has fanned the smouldering intelligence of the people. They are becoming interested at last in questions and problems beyond the circle of their own life. They are reading newspapers which would have wearied them before. They are even ready to talk Sinn Fein instead of dismissing the movement with an indifferent shrug of the shoulders or a brief contemptuous comment.

Their children, who often enough understand not a word of English until they learn it at school, will provide Ireland with a different type of man and woman. The fighting strength of their fathers will be in their blood. The intense spiritual fervour, the great perception of natural beauties will flame in their hearts. It needs great leadership—a leadership that can arouse enthusiasm and staunch loyalty—to direct aright their deepening sense of nationhood.

CHAPTER III

THE FORTUNES OF THE FARMER

THIRTY years ago the Irish farmer was a sorrowful person. For generations he had been the victim of innumerable evils. Nature was his perpetual enemy, and few of the things which man could do to thwart, harass and torment him were left undone. Ignorant of the first principles of agriculture, he muddled along from year to year, extracting from the soil no more than a tenth part to which his toil entitled him. Dragged down by a perpetual burden of debt, he was the prey of the unscrupulous trader, who bought his produce at the cheapest and sold him the necessities of life at the dearest rate. Living remote from the markets, isolated and apart from the world, there was no one to protect him against this two-handed robbery. The Land Act of 1881 had given him a measure of security of tenure, but he was still accustomed to believe that if he made improvements in his holding he would be regarded as a prosperous man and that his rent would be raised accordingly. The land

agent and the gombeen man were the spectres who haunted his life. There was no one to pity him, no one to help him, and his days passed in a poverty which is almost incomprehensible to-day. Study, for instance, this budget of the family of a little farmer for a year. It was given in the first report of the Congested Districts Board in 1892.

RECEIPTS.

	£	s.	d.
Sale of calf	2	0	0
„ two sheep	0	16	0
„ pig	2	0	0
„ fish	3	0	0
„ eggs	2	0	0
	£9	16	0

EXPENDITURE.

	£	s.	d.
Rent	1	10	0
County cess	0	2	0
Clerical charges	0	6	0
Meal	2	0	0
Flour	1	10	0
Groceries	0	10	0
Clothing	3	0	0
Lights	0	5	0
Utensils and tools	0	10	0
Tobacco	1	6	0
	£10	19	0

The home produce of the farm, consumed by the family, was valued at from £12 to £17 in the year.

That was only twenty-five years ago. To-day the Irish farmer is one of the most prosperous men in the land. At present there are roughly £80,000,000 on deposit in the banks of Ireland, and the greater part of it has been placed there by the farmers. Year by year their profits are increasing, and they have come to a condition of life which would have seemed the most impossible of miracles no more than a generation ago.

It is true, of course, that a proportion of the present prosperity is due to the war, but it is only a proportion. Prosperity had come before ever that shot was fired in Sarajevo which set the world in a blaze. It had been built up so steadily and surely through the years that in 1914 Ireland exported more food to Great Britain than any other country in the world, the value of her produce reaching the tremendous total of £33,000,000. In 1904 the value of the exported poultry and eggs was £2,800,000; in 1914 it was £4,500,000. In the twelve years previous to 1914 the average yield of potatoes had been increased by 1 ton 6 cwt. per acre over the whole Irish area. These facts by themselves are sufficient to prove that the present well-being is no mushroom growth. Through the years there have been forces at work, quietly, patiently, steadily, and the shadow has passed.

The forces are two in number. The first is the movement which took shape over twenty years ago as the clumsily-named but altogether admir-

able Irish Agricultural Organization Society. The second is the aid furnished by the Government through the two channels of the Congested Districts Board set up originally in 1891 and given extended powers in 1909, and the Department of Agriculture which was created in 1899. Self-help and help from the State—these have been the powers which have taken rural Ireland to pieces and are most valiantly and successfully striving to put it together according to a fine and beautiful plan.

It was in 1888 that the first steps were taken in the work which was to save Irish agriculture. Sir Horace Plunkett and a few others set out on a great adventure. They had, as he himself has expressed it, "no less ambitious an aim than that of rebuilding the rural life of their country." They had a formula to work upon: "Better farming, better business, better living" was their motto, and it was their idea that farmers should be taught that the right way to help themselves was by helping each other.

As these pioneers pointed out time after time in the early days of their movement, and as they continually insist, the Irishman has a habit of looking upon the Government as the cause of all his misfortunes, and expecting it to supply all his needs. It is not in the least wonderful that the habit should have been formed. The Englishman who can study the history of Ireland without acute discomfort must be an extraordinary

person. There were the long years, the centuries, when all that we did was to oppose the wishes of the Irish people, when we troubled to think about them at all. Then, a little while ago, as one measures time in history, we realized with a tragic mess of things we had made, and we decided that atonement was necessary. In the new move we proceeded to give Ireland every mortal thing we could think of that would be likely to make happy a sad and dejected nation —everything, except the one thing which she happened to want.

We invented the Congested Districts Board, gave it money, and told it to take the wilderness of the West and make it blossom as the rose. We invented laws for the subjection of scoundrel landlords. We devised the plan whereby the rural Irishman can get for thirteen pennies a week such a cottage together with half an acre of ground as would send an English farm labourer crazy with incredulous joy if he were offered it on like terms. We have taken any and every occasion of spending money on Ireland, and it is the most natural consequence that the Irishman has concluded that if he wants anything he has only to state the fact and it will be produced at once.

Sir Horace Plunkett and his friends realized this, and realized too that such a state of things was thoroughly demoralizing. They saw that it is as bad for the individual as for the nation to

learn to depend on help from without. They adopted it as a maxim that a man is only fit to be helped in so far as he helps himself. They took for their ideal the self-reliant competent nation which is able to manage its own affairs unaided without fear of disaster, and they set to work to realize that ideal in Ireland.

The foes ranged against the Irish farmer when they began their work were four in number. There were his own ignorance, the difficulty which he experienced in obtaining the materials which he required, his total lack of a fair market for his goods, and the burden of debt which hampered his every action. These were the things which had to be fought and conquered. No one would be so rash as to say that to-day the victory is complete, but the figures I have quoted show beyond all possibility of question how great is the progress that has been made.

This is not the place for a history of the Irish Agricultural Organization Society, which would indeed require a volume to itself, if all the tale of its struggles, trials and triumphs were to be told. It is enough to indicate very briefly the measures which have been taken to fight those four enemies of the farmer. To teach him the newest and best methods of carrying on the work of his farm, experts have toiled through the years. Lecturers have gone from centre to centre explaining and illustrating, criticizing and making suggestions. Men who have studied the methods

of culture adopted in other countries have been sent round the land to spread abroad the knowledge they have gained. That increase of 26 cwt. per acre in the yield of potatoes is sufficient testimony to the value of their work.

The difficulty of materials—seeds, manures and implements—has been met by supplying these things on the co-operative plan. In these days each of the thousand societies which are affiliated to the I.A.O.S. is in a position to supply any of its members with whatsoever he requires for his work. In the past the farmer had no choice but to obtain everything through the local trader, who furnished what he thought fit at imaginative prices. To-day the best of goods can be bought at reasonable rates and moreover in very many instances expensive machinery is jointly owned and used in turn by the members of a society, to their great common advantage.

Then there was the question of a market for the produce. Here the I.A.O.S. has achieved what is perhaps its most notable triumph in the establishing of co-operative creameries. So successful have they been that so long ago as 1910 more than half the total export of butter from Ireland came from these creameries. A very little consideration will show how valuable they must have been to the farmers. Any one who has the least experience of farm work will know what a troublesome business it is to make and deal with butter in small quantities. First the

milk must be set aside for the cream to rise; then there is the skimming, which leaves large proportions of potential butter in the milk—a sheer and pitiful waste. When sufficient cream has been accumulated it must be churned—with still more waste, of labour as well as of material—in some old-fashioned contrivance. The butter must be "made up," and at the end of all the toil it must be sold, probably at a ridiculous price, to some rogue of a trader who is accustomed to charge anything from fifty to one hundred per cent. for his trouble in passing it on.

From this thriftless, unprofitable game there is nothing to save a small man in a remote district. Turbine separators and the latest butter-making plant are not for him. But given a society with some hundreds of members and an accessible centre, and everything is changed at once. Each member can send his milk direct to the creamery, which will deal faithfully with it with the aid of the best machinery, extract every particle of cream and make the best possible use of what is left. The butter will be made under the best conditions and with the highest degree of skill, and it will be dispatched to the best market with no tax to pay for two or three re-handlings. The farmer will receive the best price for his milk, and—a point of considerable importance to the community—the last unit of food value will be extracted from that milk. Moreover the profits of the creamery belong to its members and

return to them in dividends on their shares and in continually improved service. This sort of thing sounds Utopian, but it happens to be now merely a plain record of fact, and a great system of creameries on these lines is one of the best of the many gifts of the I.A.O.S. to Ireland.

Finally, there is the question of debt. How cruelly the chains of the gombeen man have galled the people of Ireland was described in the first chapter of this book. The small farmer was as great a sufferer as any one. The local trader had him bound hand and foot both for the supply of all necessaries and for the sale of produce. Kept in continual poverty, he had no capital available for the purpose of implements or even for the better qualities of seeds and fertilizers. To aid him to set himself free the I.A.O.S. devised a plan. In connexion with the local societies which purchase seeds and the rest in bulk for their members they arranged a system of overdrafts for which all the members of the society concerned are jointly responsible. By this means the individual purchaser can obtain what he needs and pay for it at his convenience.

This, it must be remembered, is only the roughest outline of the work of the society, but it may be sufficient to show how considerable that work has been and continues to be. By reason of it and of other activities which have followed in its train the Irish farmer is the prosperous man that he is to-day.

It must be understood that all this work has been and is practically self-supporting. It was no part of the scheme of its promoters to provide another channel through which British money might trickle into Irish purses by way of the Exchequer. They were anxious for and have secured large quantities of British money for those purses, but it was for value received and not as a gift. The Government, however, with that irrepressible longing to give things to Ireland, was bound to find some method of spending money along these new lines, and this has been done for the past twenty odd years through the Department of Agriculture. It is being done with special fury at present for reasons which are not altogether easy to understand.

In the beginning the Department and the Society worked together in great harmony. Then after some years they began to drift apart. The Society persisted in desiring to make the farmer help himself, and the Department became more and more anxious to make him presents. The unfortunate result has been that in these days the two bodies do not love each other very much, and their activities, which are quite frequently directed to the same end, overlap to a regrettable extent. That, one imagines, is a state of things which a self-governing Ireland would take in hand and put right.

But the Department of Agriculture has done good and valuable work, and is still doing it.

It has provided all sorts of education and aid for the farmer in all directions, and at present it is making a supreme effort to assist him to produce more food than has ever come from Ireland before.

The food-producing possibilities of the land are only now beginning to be properly used. This is made plain by the fact that although, as I have said, food to the value of thirty-three million pounds was sent to Great Britain in the year before the war, Ireland was herself compelled to import food costing twenty-four millions in the same period. Much of this, of course, was of such a nature that it could not have been produced at home, but the authorities are most wisely endeavouring to show the people that the things which they can grow for themselves are better for them than the imported goods. The Department is responsible for frequent advertisements in the Irish papers insisting that oatmeal and potatoes are far more nourishing than tea and bread. An attempt is also being made to relieve the country from the necessity of importing frozen meat. The great aim just now is to make Ireland better able to feed herself and to play an ever greater part in feeding our own hungry land.

To this end the scheme of compulsory tillage has been introduced. A Government Order has been issued commanding that with certain rare exceptions ten per cent. more land in every holding shall be cultivated in 1917 than was

cultivated in 1916. At the same time every effort is being made by lectures and by advertisements to prove that, within certain limits, the increase in cultivation of the land makes it possible to keep more instead of fewer cattle, and the resources of the Department of Agriculture are being strained to give all possible assistance in the carrying out of the work.

A circular has been issued describing what has to be done and the help which is offered. Attention is called to the fixed minimum prices for oats, wheat and potatoes. To ensure supplies of seed the export of oats and potatoes has been restricted or prohibited, and maximum prices for these have been imposed upon the traders. The supplies of manures have been organized and controlled. The Ministry of Munitions has been persuaded to declare that agricultural implements and machinery are munitions of war, thus obtaining for them priority as to manufacture and transport over all non-war material. Arrangements have been made for the proper distribution of horses and labour.

A scheme of loans has been devised to assist in the purchase of machinery, and, in the case of small holdings, of manures and seeds. The rate of interest fixed is five per cent. per annum, and the loans are repayable by instalments in three or five years. The experts employed by the County Committees through which the Department works are to be set free from their ordinary

tasks to attend to the needs of each district, giving advice to individual farmers as to the best seeds and manures to use for each kind and quality of land.

Only one criticism can be made of such a scheme as this and it must be made by any one who holds with the I.A.O.S. that it is better to help a man to help himself than to hurl assistance at him free. It is impossible to avoid the reflection that this work might be done more cheaply and more effectively if greater use had been made of the existing organization. It is true that the aid of the co-operative societies is invited and honestly desired, but it is by no means certain that the fullest possible use can be made of the resources of the societies under the order as it stands.

Much however will depend on the manner and spirit in which the new scheme is carried out. In the meantime certain great advantages are bound to follow in its train. In the first place a greatly increased area will be put under cultivation and it is not in the least likely that it will ever be allowed to lapse again into pasture land. A change will inevitably take place in the condition of life of the farm labourer, and from that progress there will be no going back. Men who in spite of the activities of the societies have remained content with the old ways will now be forced to adopt the new, and, realizing their commercial value, they will never be content with the old ways again.

On the whole, then, we may take it that the order is likely to be the crown of the work of thirty years. Without the long toil of the I.A.O.S. and the Department of Agriculture it would not have been possible to carry out its provisions. But the seed has been sown through the years and we have come to the reaping of a harvest which shall not cease but become increasingly abundant in the future. Out of the burdens and necessities of war comes the material salvation of Ireland.

CHAPTER IV

IRELAND'S CINDERELLA

THE big black stew-pot moved with the almost imperceptible sway of a pendulum over the fire. It was baking day, and a comforting fire of rich turf was piled high on the stone floor of the little recess. Very soon a small oven would be placed on the fire, and the peat would be built all round about it and on top, till no one would guess that bread was baking, and that in due time there would be loaves to eat with the black tea.

Years ago you might have seen a pig or a goat, or at least a couple of hens, finding shelter under the roof of this tiny house. Such things seldom happen to-day. But here, as in all the Irish cottages that have not been built by the rural councils, was the uneven stone floor, the fireplace that was merely a recess in the wall, the dresser with its slender supply of crockery, the picture of the Blessed Virgin, the barefooted children at play with the baby in a wooden box for cradle, and the tired bits of furniture—things that have

been characteristic of Ireland from time immemorial.

If you could have peeped into the cupboard you would have seen tea and margarine and sugar and a little bit of bacon and a cup of milk. The big black pot held the day's supplies of potatoes. Towards nightfall, you would have heard the tramp of steps along the road. You would have seen the husband at his meal, and you would have watched him sitting by the peat fire afterwards—with his pipe unfilled. You would have looked at the little woman at his side, with unbusy hands because clothes cannot be made when there is no money to buy material, and the curling blueness of smoke is not for the man who is too poor to buy tobacco.

For so long the farm labourer in Ireland has been so poor that it made the heart ache to see his little home, and how devoid it was of the little things that would have brought him comfort and content. Just to be sure of a meal when hungry, a smoke after the day's work, shoes for the children and a couple of goats for milk—that would have seemed incredible happiness. But these things are denied a man who is forced by shameful economic conditions to sell his labour for twelve shillings a week. That, at the beginning of the year, was the average wage of the agricultural labourer.

With the supplementary aid of fuel or potatoes and occasionally a cottage he was expected to

maintain himself, his wife, and his family on this slender sum. If he happened to be employed by the landed gentry there was, of course, the certainty that at least he would not actually starve. The modern Irish landlord has some sense of responsibility towards his workers. As much cannot be said of the small farmer. He has won his prosperity at such bitter cost that he clings to his money tenaciously and will pay only the bare minimum at which labour can be hired. The "perquisites" given by an Irish country gentleman are often not ungenerous, but they seldom bring the labourer's wage up to the pound a week which is the lowest possible sum on which a farm worker and his family can live in health and decency—I do not say comfort—in Ireland today.

Some little while ago a priest wrote to the *Irish Times*, giving an estimate of the expenses which the labourer has to meet. The budget, for a family of six, was as follows—

	£	s.	d.
¾ lb. tea at 2*s.* 6*d.* ; 3 lb. sugar at 5½*d.*	0	3	3
Bread	0	7	0
2 lb. margarine	0	2	0
7 quarts of milk at 3*d.* . . .	0	1	9
3 lb. bacon at 1*s.* 2*d.* . . .	0	3	6
¾ stone oatmeal at 4*s.* . . .	0	3	0
2 stones potatoes at 1*s.* . . .	0	2	0
1 bag coals	0	3	0
1 qrt. paraffin oil at 4*d.* ; candles, 2*d.*	0	0	6
Rent	0	1	0
Clothes, boots, repairs . . .	0	2	6
	£1	9	6

The writer added: "If flour be taken instead of bread deduct, say, 2*s*., but add soda, buttermilk, cream of tartar, extra fire, etc. Note that there is no allowance for tobacco, and that the Food Controller allows 4½ lb. sugar and 24 lb. meat to a family of this size. Less coal would be needed later in the year, but it will be difficult to make a reduction of 9*s*. 6*d*. in the above list. As against all this many labourers are paid at the rate of 12*s*. to 14*s*. per week. Either they must starve, steal, or go into debt."

This estimate is a little misleading to those who do not know conditions as they really exist in the country. It makes no mention of perquisites. A workman at twelve shillings a week might have a cottage on his employer's estate rent free; almost certainly he would get some potatoes, and probably firing. In districts where there is no turf available for burning the landlord would be sure to allow his workpeople a moderate amount of wood. I doubt if many labourers are able to get a quart of milk a day at any price, but when it can be had threepence a quart is, as the budget indicates, the customary charge. But allowing for these differences, and supposing that fuel, house-room, and potatoes were valued at six shillings, the workman would have to cut down his rations very considerably in order to live on a pound a week paid partly in cash and partly in kind.

And this is what happens. I do not think the Irish labourer steals. The marvel is that he is so

honest. He sometimes starves, he more often gets into debt, but as a rule he drags out a weary, unhealthy existence, living on as little as possible, making ends meet somehow. His children run about barefooted along the lanes. New clothes come into the cottage very rarely. When the day comes when some improvement in living is absolutely essential to life he goes into debt.

I talked of these things to an Army officer who, invalided home from the front, had taken up his farming duties once more in the rich land of Meath. It occurred to him that while he had been away the cost of living had risen even in Ireland, and when he discovered that one of his best workmen was in debt, he paid the debt for him, and made it his business to find out exactly how the man and his wife and three children lived. This was the budget—

	£	s.	d.
Eleven 2-lb. loaves at 5*d.*	0	4	7
½ lb. tea at 2*s.* 4*d.*	0	1	2
1 lb. sugar at 6*d.*	0	0	6
2½ lb. margarine at 1*s.*	0	2	6
2½ lb. bacon at 1*s.* 1*d.*	0	2	9½
Flour	0	0	9½
Soap, 2*d.*; candles, 2*d.*; soda, 1*d.*	0	0	5
Two pints of oil	0	0	4
Matches, 1*d.*; pepper, 1*d.*; polish 1*d.*	0	0	3
3 oz. tobacco	0	1	3
3½ quarts milk at 4*d.*	0	1	2
	0	15	9

House and potatoes and fuel were given free in

this case, but the man was still unable to live on his wage or to make any allowance for clothes.

"When I found out what it cost him to live," his employer told me, "I immediately raised his wages."

And that is what so few employers in Ireland have done. They have not taken the trouble to find out what it costs their workpeople to live. I believe that if they would jot down on paper the items of a household budget such as is given above they would be amazed, and the best kind of employer would do as this invalided officer did, and raise the men's wages.

But even if this is not done the labourer on a big estate is infinitely better off than the worker at a small farm, because employment for various members of his family is often offered. The boys are taken into the stables or on to the land as soon as they leave school, and earn five or six shillings weekly; the girls help in the dairy or come into the house as indoor servants; even the mother may do a little needle or laundry work. In such cases the family is not compelled to make the wretched and impossible attempt to lead a decent honest life on twelve shillings a week and perquisites. With every member of the family earning something, if only a little, the joint income ensures that there will be a sufficiency of food in the house, if there is nothing else.

The relations that exist between such workers and their employers are often of a happy descrip-

tion. Men and women are glad to remain for years in the employment of a family that shows them a little kindness and takes some interest in their affairs. And in Ireland where there is so much less convention of manners and so much less distinction of classes than in England, you get very friendly relations between employer and employe. Irish labourers on big estates are not the servile slaves they have been pictured. The system of payment tends to destroy their independence, of course, but their natural wit and charm is alien to anything approaching to obsequiousness, and they will chat with their employers with a quite spontaneous freedom devoid of all offence.

I know, too, from intimate personal experience, that employers are glad to meet their old workers as friends long after their days of toil are past. I have been with such landlords, men of position in the country. It oftens happens, when motoring or riding into the nearest town, that they are glad to call on old servants who have settled down to end their days in peace, taking tea with them and talking over old days as they might with friends in their own social position.

But there is no doubt that it is bad for the country and bad for the man to receive his wages in kind. With the best of intentions the landlord may forget to tell his steward to send firing down to the cottage where the family shivers round an empty fireplace, or some dispute may arise in the

employer's absence as to the promised quantity of potatoes, and the labourer has to go without until the matter can be adjusted. Privations of such character do not happen when a man's wage is paid in cash with automatic regularity.

But the effect on the character of the people is what matters most. If you have an enormous majority of wage-earners who are accustomed to look for a rise not in money which they can spend as they like, but in extra potatoes or fuel, you cannot get a nation of vigorous independence. Money is only of value in so far as it enables a man to get those things that he wants. If you are to choose for him the things that he must have, you take away his freedom. Even if you pay him in something which may be actually its fair value, it is really worth very much less, because it does not carry the freedom that money represents.

There are signs that this condition of affairs is passing in Ireland. There is a dawn of hope for the agricultural labourer even in this deep-seated custom. In very many districts he has already perceived it, and has been quick to take advantage of it. The compulsory tillage order which has been made by the Government has turned him into a person of importance; it has put him in a position, for the first time, to make terms with his employer.

Occupiers of land are compelled this year to put under the plough 10 per cent. more of their holdings than was cultivated last year, and the demand for

labour has immediately and inevitably increased, since tillage necessitates far greater man power than grazing. With the increased demand has come the increase in value of labour. Almost for the first time in his life the farm worker has known the weapon of the strike. To-day he demands higher wages. If the employer refuses, he leaves work with perfect dignity and good humour, and resumes it in a few days later at the wage which his employer has been forced to give. And the increase is not in wood or potatoes, but in money. Already wages have gone up five shillings a week in some districts. This is partly due to the example of the Government who are paying twenty-five shillings a week to labourers employed on land which the authorities have taken over for tillage. In Ireland wages, boards are preferred to the setting up of a fixed legal minimum, and varying with the traditions of different parts wages are being fixed at from eighteen to twenty-one shillings a week.

The old wages will never come back. Men who have tasted for the first time in their cramped and unhappy lives the joys of independence and comfort, will never again work for the old bad wages. The Government could not have done a better thing for the Irish labourer than to compel his employer to till the land. The order means more food for the people, but it also means better wages and better living for the worker who has always been the Cinderella of his country.

The wonderful little houses that have been built by the Government for the Irish labourers will now be something more than a collection of walls and ceilings. You cannot make a home out of a house without furniture, no matter how fine the house may be. The possibilities of real home-making that these houses hold will be realized as never before with the coming of a living wage.

And their possibilities are very great. All Ireland is sprinkled with cheery little houses on which thousands of pounds of Government money have been spent. Built at a cost of £180 to £220 they carry with them half an acre of land, and the rent of these cottages is thirteenpence weekly. Moreover, if the tenant makes the best use of his half-acre he is entitled to another half-acre absolutely free.

I have been in many of these houses, and I know what a contrast they are to the cabins of five-and-twenty years ago. In those days of poverty and sorrow men and women and animals dwelt together in abject misery, with the thatching of their houses falling off, the windows blocked up with rags or paper, darkness and dirt inside, and the untilled land beyond. I thought of these things as I looked at the pleasantness and comfort of a little cottage in the County Meath, one of the hundreds which the Government has erected. The chief room was a large-sized kitchen where a wood fire was burning brightly in a modern fireplace.

The scullery—unknown in the old type of cabin—was neatly shelved and sufficiently big for the storage of wood and pots and pans and brushes. There was a little room on one side of the kitchen which was used as a parlour. Two bedrooms led off from the other side of the kitchen, and all the rooms were lofty and had big windows. The house was soundly built and well finished in woodwork and papering. The half-acre was beautifully tilled, and the little holding exhaled a most exhilarating atmosphere of tidiness and business and comfort and content.

I have in my memory another picture of a row of cottages in the County Wicklow, which climb up the hillside away by the sea. They are charmingly designed, and they have trim little gardens such as one sees in England. But the great pride of these houses is that they possess two stories.

"It's the first time I've ever been upstairs," one of the owners explained. She had always dwelt in the country and knew only the one-floored cabin, and she felt like a millionaire when she had a little house with an upstairs.

The rent of these two-storied cottages is 1*s.* 9*d.* a week. They are so pretty and comfortable that well-to-do people in Dublin wanted them as week-end residences, but they are let, and very rightly so, only to the agricultural labourer. Such houses as these are springing up all over the land—in the gracious beauty of the warm south, on the

wild waste-land of the Connemara coast, in the treeless spaces of Donegal, in the hills of Wicklow, and in the lonely pastures of Meath.

If Irish women were not the worst cooks in all the world the labourer of to-morrow might speedily become as happy and prosperous as the farmer. But the women know nothing beyond the making of bread and the cooking of potatoes, and in places where bakers' bread can be bought it is actually preferred to the buttermilk bread which their grandmothers used to produce. It seems indeed that such bread, made so deliciously of soda and buttermilk, is to die out in Ireland. Even porridge is becoming unfashionable. This is partly due, however, to the great lack of milk. Almost certainly the next agitation in land will be for grazing rights or more land for the labourer.

It is indeed a bitter thing that in a land which is crying out for healthy manhood and womanhood, hundreds of children should be brought up without the sustenance which milk only can supply. I am told that an Oldcastle doctor attended a child of a year and a half who had never tasted milk. The mother was too delicate to feed her baby, and as she was utterly unable to get milk all the children had been brought up on a diet of bread and black tea.

And this is not uncommon. You would imagine that in a land of pastures such as Ireland the

supply of milk would be limitless. But the farmers are finding that it is more paying to fatten bullocks than to develop dairy work. The small farmer keeps a cow for his own use, sending some milk to the creamery, but he seldom has any surplus to dispose of to his farm hands. And he will not allow his men, even if they should at last have saved enough to buy one cow, the right to graze on his land. To put cows into a field with bullocks is not in accordance with his scheme. Nothing must happen that will spoil the quality of his cattle, and the presence of cows might prevent the bullocks from fattening as they ought and so lessen their market value.

It is supposed that you cannot keep a cow on less than three acres. The bewildered labourer then turns to goats. It is essential that he should provide milk for his children somehow, and as a kid can be bought for five shillings and the best kind of goat for a couple of pounds, such an investment would seem profitable. But a goat gives milk only during the summer months, and though its average yield of a pint and a half daily would be very useful, what is to happen in the winter?

But the farmer is the stumbling-block to even this alternative. Goats are untidy beasts, he complains. They cannot in health be kept tied to a post. They must be allowed to adventure forth on to the roads to find pickings on the hedges. And the farmer doesn't like his hedges to be de-

stroyed. Therefore goat-keeping is strongly discouraged. I have seen these unhappy goats many times in Ireland. They are tied up in the half-acre, looking enviously and miserably towards the hedges, and their yield of milk is so scanty that they are scarcely worth keeping.

It is apparent that in such circumstances there is only one thing which the labourer can do, and that is to cry loudly for the right to graze on his employer's land, or for the right to rent more land for himself. These are cries that will have to be answered, and before very long. With better wages more and more labourers will be in a position to buy cows, and they must have some place to put them. Either the Government will have to compel the farmer to keep sufficient cows to supply milk to their men at fair rates, or the half-acre will have to be increased, or grazing rights will have to be established ; or, best of all where it can be done, some system of co-operative grazing must be built up.

In thickly congested districts this ought to be possible enough, but in those parts of Ireland where the holdings are scattered at distant intervals co-operation would be valueless if it meant that a man had to walk some miles in order to milk his cow and fetch the milk home. It is a grave problem and it is one that ought to be tackled without delay, because the first essential to the building up of a new Ireland is a happy, healthy childhood. National childhood living mainly on

bread and black tea is not a happy promise for the days to come.

Better housing, better wages—these are things that have come to pass. It remains for the Government to complete its work by the making of a better childhood.

CHAPTER V

IRISH INDUSTRY

THERE is something at once pathetic and ludicrous in a nation that imposes severe taxation on the very industries that, scientifically developed, might provide healthy employment for thousands of men and women who, sooner or later, become the care of the State in workhouse or prison.

Take, for instance, the question of tobacco. In America the authorities are content that home-grown tobacco should pay a duty of threepence in the pound. But the tobacco grown in the United Kingdom is taxed to the extent of five and fourpence in the pound, which is merely twopence less than the duty on tobacco imported from abroad. Such a concession is too slender to make it worth the while of British capitalists to start tobacco-growing on an extensive scale. Yet Ireland is peculiarly suited in soil and atmosphere to the cultivation of tobacco, and the revenue that would be lost if the duty were taken off would be recovered in a few years by the

lessened expenditure on those social and domestic reforms which are the Government's cure for Irish unrest.

It has always been the British policy to destroy rather than to encourage Irish trade. This in itself should be the justification for giving the Irish preferential treatment. By the Cattle Acts of 1663 and of 1680 the importation of all cattle into England was prohibited. Navigation Acts made commerce with foreign countries impossible, and when, in desperation, the unhappy people attempted to export wool the English House of Commons asked William III to stifle the industry, with the result that in 1669 the export from Ireland of manufactured wool to any country was forbidden, while raw wool was allowed to be sold to English traders only. When, in 1699, it was proposed to extend the manufacture of linen, then in progress in Ulster, to Leinster, there was the fiercest opposition in England. In short, whenever Irish trade came into competition with English trade its enterprise and its activities were quickly cut short. Fountains of wealth and happiness that existed in the country were sealed with seals that were not to be broken, with the result that to-day the industrial life of the country is so nebulous that it can scarcely be defined.

These are the things that it is well to remember if it is suggested that the remission of the tobacco duty on Irish-grown produce would be unfair to English traders. The Irish trader has suffered

through the centuries; it is surely time that now he should have his chance.

That tobacco can be grown with the greatest measure of success in Ireland has been proved in the experiment made by a landlord whose name will always be remembered with gratitude in the history of Irish progress. I do not suppose that there is a man in Ireland to-day who has done more for his country than Col. Sir Nugent Everard, Lord-Lieutenant of the County Meath. Sir Nugent has faith in his own ideas. He believes that there is a splendid future for the tobacco industry in Ireland. In this belief he has made a great experiment, and his factory at Randlestown is the practical expression of his faith.

To talk to Sir Nugent Everard is to realize in a moment that he is not an illusionist, but a practical idealist. In religious faith he is a Protestant; in politics a "devolutionist"; in his ordinary way of living a man of great humanity and of immense zeal for the welfare of the land. And it is the practical idealist who is wanted so urgently in Ireland—not the paid politician with cheap political pills destined to cure mental indigestion, but the man who is content to give concrete expression to his nationhood by making experiments and giving of his time and of his money in helping the people to help themselves.

It is a romantic story. In the neighbourhood of Randlestown there has not been a single case

of emigration since the factory was started. That is sufficient evidence of the contentment of the workers. The commercial success of the venture was apparent in a letter I happened to see from a firm of brokers intimating that they would be glad to buy up all the tobacco produced on the estate during the present year.

Such results have been won at the cost of infinite patient hope and after the most unreasoning opposition. It was in 1898 that Sir Nugent, then Col. Everard, first saw the great possibilities of a revival of the industry which has been prohibited for about seventy years under the severest penalties. Ordinary tillage does not supply a farm labourer with continuous employment. Of the 1,500 acres which Sir Nugent farms over 300 were under tillage last year. To-day there is still more tillage, but this means concentrated rather than extended labour. Col. Everard wanted to find some means of work for his employés and their families that would fit in with the ordinary seasons. This was needed especially to provide work for young girls who could not find sufficient domestic work in the scattered houses around and who so drifted into Dublin and Liverpool and London and New York in search of work.

To the humane employer the tobacco industry appeals because it is particularly suitable for women by reason of its healthfulness. In a certain tobacco factory in Belfast, for instance,

there is less sickness than in any other factory in the town. The work is pleasant and interesting, and the soft fragrance of the tobacco leaf is as delicious as the scent of flowers after the steaming heat of linen factories in Ulster. Moreover, work in a tobacco factory is so light that it can be given to children without injuring their health. I point out this feature not because I believe it to be good that little boys and girls should be handling tobacco when they ought to be handling school books, but as an indication that the industry is without those disadvantages that make tragic wreckage of the womanhood of the North in congested, laborious workshops.

Permission was given by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1898 to experiment on a small scale, and Col. Nugent Everard looked after the North, while Lord Dunraven undertook the revival of the industry in the South. For five or six years experimental plots were grown in various counties in order to test the suitability of the Irish ground and climate. Both the land and the atmosphere were found to be admirably adapted to the purpose. In 1903 Col. Everard sent his son, Major Everard, to America, to study methods of growing and curing. The following year the first big experiment was made at Randlestown in the planting of twenty acres with tobacco.

There were tedious difficulties in the way

Farmers were told by busybodies that tobacco growing would ruin their land. They were afraid of the newness of it all, and Sir Nugent had to pay them £20 an acre instead of £5 an acre in order to encourage them to take up the industry. To-day the farmers know that so far from injuring their land tobacco makes first-rate foundation for future crops, providing a natural manure which is often deficient. At the moment about 200 farmers are cultivating the leaf in Ireland, adding to their existing prosperity by their part in the new trade.

I had the pleasure of visiting Sir Nugent Everard's factory. It makes a happy picture. The tobacco leaf, coming from counties as far apart as Antrim and Dublin, is delivered in bales, tied with twine, and is immediately stored in tiers in the various barns. These bales are taken as they are required to the grading barn, where thirty-five busy girls, thoroughly happy at their work, sort out the leaves according to their different qualities, tying them in "hands." The tobacco is then straddled on long laths until it is ready to make its journey through the Proctor drying machine on a long chain which conveys it from the end to the mouth. During its passage it is dried out at a temperature of 200°. It is afterwards cooled, and in the last chamber it receives sufficient steam to bring up its moisture to the 10 to 12 per cent. required by the trade. As it comes from the machine it is issued to the

packer, who arranges it in a hogshead in regular layers. When quite full the hogshead is run under a steam press and subjected to a pressure of about seven tons, and then headed and coopered up. It is finally weighed by an Excise officer, who is always present during the packing, after which it is put into a bonded warehouse.

Sir Nugent Everard has shown that the farmers are willing to grow the tobacco leaf and that they can do it; he has demonstrated that they can prepare the tobacco for the market; he has proved that he can sell it when it is ready for sale. Most noteworthy of all, the modern factory which he has built is evidence of the healthy employment that tobacco drying and curing can provide for the workers.

The industry ought to be extended, and it would be extended if a sympathetic Government would remove some difficulties which cannot be overcome by private effort.

If the Government had not originally agreed, in 1903, to grant a rebate of one-third of the duty the experiment would probably not have been made. Having made the concession the Government apparently repented of its generosity. Six years later it changed its policy. It took off the rebate and made instead a grant of £50 per acre to subsidize the industry. This grant remained in force for five years, when the Government again changed its wavering mind.

The Department of Agriculture, which owes so much to the initiative of private individuals and societies, submitted a scheme to the Treasury for the purpose of extending the benefits of tobacco growing to small farmers. Sir Nugent Everard and Lord Dunraven were selected as re-handlers to such of these farmers who agreed to cultivate tobacco. The grant of £50 an acre was decreased to £25 an acre, at which it stands to-day, and out of this small subsidy the re-handlers are expected to finance the scheme by providing the farmers with tobacco seed and artificial manures, by erecting curing barns at the cost of £60 an acre, and by providing qualified instructors. In addition both Sir Nugent and Lord Dunraven were compelled to provide a re-handling factory equipped with a Proctor drying and ordering machine with engine and boiler and adequate accommodation for grading and fermenting, at a cost of £3,000.

Out of each acre, which produces about a thousand pounds of tobacco, the Government gets £266 13*s.* 4*d.*, less the grant of £25. But whereas the Proctor machinery at Randlestown and in the South would each take the produce of three thousand acres, the scheme is limited by Government restrictions to 114 acres.

The story is typically Irish. The whole story of Ireland, indeed, is one of tragic waste—waste in land, waste in manhood, waste in brain power, and, as this limitation shows, waste in industry. Here

is an expensive, well-built, up-to-date plant, but owing entirely to Government regulations, but an infinitesimal proportion of its capacity is in use. The Government appear to be afraid to adopt a definite policy of encouragement of home production. Their attitude is that of the man who fears that prosperity amongst his workers will be a menace to himself, and so pays them low wages. The Government, persuaded after months of patient spade work on the part of Sir Nugent Everard and Lord Dunraven, to make an attempt to help the awakened industry, seemed to be frightened and almost dismayed the moment it proved successful.

The experimental work has been done at monetary loss to the two large-minded men who carried out the venture, and the time has come for the Government to adopt a really bold policy and remit the greater part of the duty. Compulsory tillage and the trebled prices which farmers can get for their crops to-day make them unwilling to grow tobacco at the old prices. They want more money, and if they cannot get it I fear they will leave the tobacco industry alone and devote themselves entirely to ordinary farm work. They will never, assuredly, go back to the dismal time of former years, but they will not always get the inflated prices that arise in a great war, and when trade resumes its normal position the value of an industry which has been permanently established and that can be culti-

vated in slack periods will be greater to the farmer then than it is now.

If the Treasury refuses to allow the acreage under cultivation to be increased, if it refuses to remit a part of the enormous tax, it is practically inevitable that the industry, born under so bright a promise, will expire. The fact that tobacco can be grown on sodden bogland that would produce no crops of food value is sufficient answer to those who cry out that wheat or oats must come first.

The cultivation of home tobacco is of especial use at a time when freightage has to be zealously conserved for essential articles. Obviously, it is better to bring tobacco to the country from Ireland than from America or the Near East. And Irish tobacco is slowly building up a reputation for itself. It was a hard fight at the outset to secure a market. Tobacco manufacturers are conservative, and are disinclined to try new products. But Sir Nugent Everard's enthusiasm was dauntless. His aim was to get a market not by offering tobacco at a low price but rather by securing a name for quality. This he has done. The difficulty to-day is not to get the brokers to take his products, but to get enough produce to satisfy the brokers.

It is here that there is such a great chance for that wise statesmanship that can look beyond the immediate necessities of the day to the golden promise of a to-morrow. In these times of war

it is difficult enough to find funds for enterprises not directly associated with military needs. Yet it is eternally true that in questions of social reform it is not fresh expenditure but rather a transference of expenditure that is wanted. If greater provision is made for the technical instruction of boys and girls less money is needed for the building and equipment of workhouses; if you subsidize schools of mothercraft and health centres you have to spend less on the maintenance of the feeble-minded and physically deficient. So it is with Ireland. Were Government money put into this revived industry with its proved future less money would have to be spent in housing and on all those social remedies that have to be applied to a diseased and healthless nation. The return of capital in the goodwill and sentiment would be worth as much to the Government as to a small business man. For in setting a new industry on its feet you open out unending possibilities of usefulness and prosperity. The return comes very surely in the content of a happy self-supporting people. To the statesman of wisdom such a return is infinitely more precious than a mere return in money.

And there is this to be said, too. The district round about Sir Nugent Everard's factory is one of the few which, by the return of the last census, shows an actual increase in the population. Irish people are not afflicted with an incurable desire to leave their country. Most of them would much

rather stay at home if only it was possible for them to earn a living wage. The tobacco industry can secure such a wage for thousands, besides adding tremendously to the wealth of the country. England has in this matter a chance of bestowing a great benefit on Ireland at little or no cost to herself. It is for the people of England to see that it is done.

CHAPTER VI

THE FORCES OF TRADITION

TRADITION, in all its strangeness and mystery, is an infinitely powerful force in Ireland. Yet the English wayfarer in Ireland might imagine that no land was more destitute of tradition. The very forces that have been at work during all the years have found few material expressions. The Englishman thinks of the little Tudor villages of his country, of thirteenth-century inns, of handwrought pewter or period furniture in farmhouses, of bits of the countryside that cry out the glory of their past in every house, in every little garden, in the very arrangements of streets. In Ireland he sees the ninth-century round towers which the monks built as a protection against the Danes, or some ruined Cistercian foundation. But he looks vainly for small Irish towns which have the tender appeal and the wonderful beauty of an old English village. And unless he visits the Dublin museum, in which the treasures of the past are guarded, it is possible that he wonders what Irish tradition means, and

how it is that a people with so passionate a love of home should have set up so few expressions of it in the making of those things that last with the years.

Yet the face of Ireland to-day is an explanation of much that troubles the English mind. The villages which seem so poor and are so unlovely are expressions of the poverty of the people—a poverty that has always been so acute and so wretched that it gave no inspiration to and provided no means for the creation of permanent things. Irish nationality and tradition had to find an outlet in some other way. They were none the less real because the expressions that remain are to be found by tokens other than beaten silver or pictures in stone.

In those parts of Ireland where Gaelic is still the language of the people, you find men and women whose profession it is to tell stories. These story-makers kindle the imagination of the least responsive by their wonderful, living romances; by their narrations of splendid deeds of kings and heroes of the past, or by the simple tale of some saint, or in the whisper of curious superstitions. From such men and women you may sometimes hear a great romance that may afterwards be found preserved in manuscript form in an Irish museum. Lady Gregory tells in one of her essays of a poem taken down from a countryman because of its especial beauty, visioning days that were long past. It was discovered

after that word for word the poem was contained in a manuscript, generations old, that was conserved in the Irish Academy. And because the spoken word has a greater power than those things which the eye may see, tradition is of more moment and of immeasurably greater meaning to the Irish than it is to the English.

There is, to the English heart, a sure but quiet sense of comfort and happiness in the contemplation of some loved familiar town. To say that the English have no consciousness of the appeal of past years would be the sign of curious ignorance. But it remains true that the past is as the dear remembered dead to the English, while to the Irish it lives with blazing vividness. It is natural enough that this should be so. The story of the nations as told by an unimaginative schoolmistress is not the same as the story of a nation handed down through the years from father to son. The ways of a thousand years ago that have found revelation in wood or stone or metal are very different from those that, from sheer poverty, have their expression in the voices of the land.

There are tokens that the Ireland of past years had the power of making beautiful things. Whenever the shadow of poorness was lifted for a while, the Irish perception of beauty found its way into delicate pen work, in highly decorative ornaments, in detailed handicrafts. But the shadow never passed so completely that this

little nation could do what England did. . . . To understand what tradition means in Ireland it is necessary to look beyond the Cistercian ruins on the banks of the Boyne, beyond even the seven churches that sleep in the Vale of Wicklow.

In all the years in which men have fought and bled and died in the making of nations, through the vast changes which have swept with unresisted force over all Europe, in the fashioning of constitutions or in the remodelling of a nation's life on an external plan, Ireland has remained gloriously aloof and proudly changeless. Alone among the peoples of the West she was unconscious of the influence of Rome. No Roman soldier landed on her golden shores. While the civilizations of Europe began to grope feebly after the Roman system of intense and concentrated materialism, Ireland stood apart. Roman government became centralized to the last degree; Irish government developed an even stronger tendency to decentralization. Roman ideals aspired to a clear-cut plan of nationality controlled by a central body, but the Irish were perfectly happy that in their various communities they should be independent while bound together by the closest ties in common religion, culture, custom, art, and learning.

Inevitably, a small nation of confederated communities could not through all the years resist the powers of great, organized countries, but the fact that from the very beginnings of history

Ireland clung with immense earnestness to her own ideals is evidence enough that her nationhood was something different from the nationhood of other lands. Her very conservatism, if it rendered her less able to defend herself against her enemies, joined her peoples together in so deep and spiritual a way that oppression from outside served but to strengthen her nationality.

To read the history of Ireland in all its tragedy and storms, in its cruelty and in its ugliness, is to see how this sense of nationhood has lasted through the years. The governing powers of English monarchs could not destroy it; the invasion of Norman barons was powerless to extinguish its flame; persecution in religion intensified the burning torch of nationhood; the oppression of England in later years caused the banner of independence to be held still higher, when out of the sheer misery of the people you might have expected it to have sunk to the ground.

This is not a history of Ireland; I do not intend even briefly to trace the keeping of Irish nationhood in the long and unhappy relations between England and Ireland. But if individuality in political nationhood counts for much, individuality in religion counts for even more, and it cannot be left unconsidered in any study of the land. From the first days when St. Patrick brought the knowledge of Christ to the country Ireland has been known as the island of

saints. Twelve hundred years ago an Irish writer told of the saints who worked for God in his days.

"The first order of Catholic saints," he relates, "were most holy, shining like the sun." These saints were 350 in number, all bishops, and beginning with St. Patrick they taught Christianity to the people, as those of the order who followed them did during the entire century. The second order of saints, whom this curious writer tells us "were very holy, and shone like the moon," lasted for half a century, and their priests founded monasteries and went into far lands to preach the Gospel. The third order of saints of only an odd hundred priests "were holy and shone like the stars," and their work, in seventy-five years, was the work of prayer and contemplation, for they were hermits dwelling in silent, lonely places, and having no part in the life of the world outside.

The fame of these early monastic schools was spread all over Europe by the missionaries who set out at the end of the sixth century to convert the heathen. It was the Irish saint Columkille who, with his monks, revealed the glory of Christ to Northern and Western Scotland; it was St. Aidan, the Irishman who entered the monastery of Iona, who brought Christianity to Northumberland. In their zeal for pilgrimage these Irish missionaries journeyed all over Europe, tramping thousands of miles along stony roads and over

the roughest hills, going even to Iceland and the desert land of Egypt. The spread of religion on the Continent and the revival of learning was due to the piety and knowledge of these men. They have their just remembrance in the Roman missal of to-day with its calendar of Irish saints unknown to English Catholics.

St. Brigid of Kildare; St. Mel, first bishop of Ardagh; St. Romuald, founder of the Camaldolese monks; St. Frigidian, the great missionary; St. Dympna, virgin and martyr—these are surely holy names to the Irish heart. In the Mass of St. Rumold, bishop of Dublin, there is a collect which tells of the faith of Ireland.

"O God," comes the supplication, "Who at the intercession of blessed Rumold, Thy martyr and pontiff, didst by Thy power solidify the waters of a river, and who after he had been submerged for three days didst marvellously deliver him unhurt from the embrace of death and from the depths of the river: do Thou graciously grant that by his merits and prayers we may be saved from amid the perilous billows of this world to be brought to the haven of everlasting bliss."

Despite the scholarly beauty of its language, I do not think the Book of Common Prayer has within it a single passage that expresses the faith and the nationality of a people so eloquently as this collect of St. Rumold's Mass. To hold to-day in dearest possession the faith once given to the saints, to hold it in common with the

greater number of a nation's people, to belong to-day as their fathers did ten hundred years ago to that city set on a hill, and to have kept that city as a fortress against which no attack should prevail, is to have conserved something that makes for nationhood more than most things which the mind can conceive.

So it is that to-day there are men and women who will tell you in some lonely little cabin on the Connemara hills as sweetly and as vividly of their saints as of their kings and princes. Cuculainn, the mighty hero of ancient days ; Finn, the son of Cumal ; Maive, queen of Connacht ; Oscar the brave ; Dermot O'Dyha the gallant-hearted—with names of saints they appear with magnificent clearness in the glorious pageantry of the past which some story-teller will picture for you still. And yet such tales are not mere fiction. Many of them are founded on events which have actually happened. Even those tales that have come from the imagining of the people centre round some splendid historical figure, and their glory and wealth and colour reflect the spirit of their age and so have a value almost as great as the value of fact.

The tradition of the music of Ireland is not perhaps more interesting than that of England or Wales or Scotland, but music must have meant more to the people of Ireland than to most communities. An old religious poem of the land tells of the sorrow of Adam and Eve in their first year

of banishment from Paradise. "They were," says the poem, "without food, fire, house, music, or raiment." To the Irish of long years ago music was an utter essential. There were spinning-wheel songs and milking-time songs and ploughing-time songs; there were tunes for dancing, and there was "sorrow music" for death. There were cradle songs and dirges, and the harp, most plaintive and sweet of all instruments, is mentioned in the earliest literature. Many of these ancient songs are still to be heard in those parts of Ireland where the sense of nationality is as strong to-day as it was in the reign of fighting kings.

In their politics, in their religion, in their music, in their literature, in the very naming of their towns and villages, the Irish have built up their conception of nationality. In Cork there is a little place called Coolkellure—in Gaelic cuil-celabhair—meaning a recess of the song of the birds, a place apart where the wayfarer might listen to the warbling of some sweet-throated lark. To know even a little Gaelic is to derive immense pleasure in puzzling out the names of places that have such musical meanings as "melodious little hill" or "little red spot" or "cluster of nuts" or "the mountain of prayer." All over the land there are such places, whose names are poems in themselves.

If the nationhood expressed with such appealing beauty needed a further cementing that was

provided in the cruelty of oppression which a jealous and stupid empire imposed on the Irish people.

To see the rich measure of success which has come to England in her government of far places, to hear the exiled Englishman talking of the Motherland, to know how the New Zealander or Canadian who has never even seen England talks of it as home, and then to turn to another page of history and learn how the Irish have come to regard England, is to be shamed, humiliated and profoundly puzzled.

Persecution has always consolidated those very systems which it has sought to eradicate. The Catholic Church in France, attacked in bitterness by a godless Government, saw the emblem of Christ crucified torn down from the walls of her schools, and her nuns exiled from her shores like criminals. Yet the beacon of religious faith in France to-day is more luminant and held more loftily than ever it has been in the past.

And so with the nationality of Ireland. The more zealously that British stupidity and British jealousy and British pride have endeavoured to subdue Irish nationality, the more fully has it blossomed. Nothing kindles a sense of nationhood so finely as common suffering, common assault. The Englishman has not an inheritance of a land oppressed from the beginning of history by one foreign Government; there is not in his memory the unfading picture of a dearly-held faith mocked and insulted; his is not the legacy

of common laws and customs and culture conserved by little people down all the years. The nationality that he holds to be just and holy is the nationality that expands imperially, making new countries, building up new nations. He looks to the without. The Irishman looks to the within. He has no conception of founding great colonies for the making of prosperity. His colonies are those of the soul. He would rather send missionaries to convert the heathen than politicians or explorers to found new lands.

Strange indeed that such a nationality, so modest, so simple, so beautiful in its aims, should have been hurt by the hand of England. For England had surely nothing to fear from a little land whose people asked only that they might make their own rule of life, to worship God in the busy-ness of day and in the starry silence of night, who had no ambitious plans of settlement or colonizing, but who wanted merely to have sufficient freedom of industry to live in decency and comfort and in holiness.

These things the men who governed England denied through the long years, and they cannot be swiftly forgotten. But under common oppression, under the sense of injustice held alike by all, the peoples, in the spreading bitterness towards England, Ireland's nationality grew day by day, year by year. Its reality and its splendour will shine as clearly in the prosperity and sunshine of the coming days as it has in the shadows of the

past. For the nationhood of Ireland has lived down all the years, and neither the jealousy of kings nor the hatred of a people can destroy it.

CHAPTER VII

THE MIND OF IRELAND

LITTLE minor books of thinking are not of much consequence to the student of literature who looks for splendour of language or some great message. Yet it is often the unknown literature rather than the literature of fame that expresses the character of a people. There is more of an actual Ireland in the verse of Padraic Colun or in the novels of Canon Sheehan than in the plays of Synge or the writings of George Moore.

Since these days of war it has become the fashion to discover the souls of countries. There are books about the soul of France and the soul of Russia. There is even a book about the soul of the war. But I believe that no one has attempted, under such clearly-defined nomenclature, a comprehensive study of the soul of England. Too vast and enormously complex to possess a single soul, England shows herself in a thousand souls. The genius who can find some co-relation between these differing manifestations is he who comes nearest to

understanding the English temperament. But with Ireland it is different.

If this is the land of small divisions it is also the land of great unities. The Ulsterman of Derry is deeply resentful if you suggest that he is really Scotch. He dislikes intensely to have the authenticity of his Irish nationality questioned. Indeed, I have met Ulstermen who have tried to prove to me that the real Irish are not the Irish of the South but of the North. Although nationality does not mean to Ulster what it means to Leinster and Munster and Connaught, it nevertheless exists, and it finds its expression in ways peculiar to the North, and especially in literature. In the modern writings of Ireland there is little reflection of the great division between North and South, particularly if you except newspapers. Whether you take some mystical fragment of Yeats, or the wistful verses of W. M. Letts, or some quite unimportant play by a member of the Cork Twenty Club, or the rollicking novels of George Birmingham, you breathe the fragrant air of Ireland. The Irish writer of to-day who believes that writing is really worth while believes, too, that the only subject worth writing about is Ireland.

Minor English verse expresses a hundred phases, most of which are not directly related to the more intimate type of patriotism. Those poets whom their country claims as especially British sing more wonderfully of great empires, of might and of power, of splendid deeds, than of the smoke that

curls from cottage at eventide, or of empty cradles that once held the little sons now distant in some foreign land. And this is true whether you take the clarion words of Alfred Noyes or Henry Newbolt, whether you listen to the imperialism of Kipling or of Rupert Brooke, whether you read Lawrence Binyon or a collection of the verse of very minor Georgians published by the Poetry Bookshop. For the love of those little things of which life is largely made, for the perception of real values as distinct from those things that do not matter, for a childlike innocence and the most beautiful turn of humour, you have to go to-day to the Irish poets.

I do not say that they are great poets. Most of them are quite unambitious in form and subject. But they write of the things that are shared in common by all the peoples, and they are poets that can readily bring tears to the eyes or a smile to the lips. All of them reveal a fine sense of nationhood, a passionate love of the land. Miss Letts, for instance, writes—

> I think that if I lay dying in some land,
> Where Ireland is no more than just a name,
> My soul would travel back to find that strand
> From whence it came.

She goes on to talk about the harbour in the evening light, of little ships, of the coast-line from Arklow to Cahore, of wide-eyed goats and small old houses, and then there is her final verse—

And then the Angelus—I'd surely see
The swaying bell against a golden sky,
So God who kept the love of home in me
Would let me die.

Padraic Colun, in his exquisite "Old Woman of the Roads," writes as tenderly of such things There is a pitiful emptiness in the cry of the old woman—

And I am praying to God on high,
And I am praying Him night and day,
For a little house, a house of my own,
Out of the wind and rain's way.

It is ever the same. It may be in the verses of Katherine Tynan or Dora Sigerson Shorter or of Francis Ledwige, but it is there—the strain of patriotism that is not concerned only with songs of battle. All the splendour of great hills and of little streams, of small harbours and long rivers, of sea-storms and sunshine, of the music of the mass and the note of a bird, of the tilling of the brown earth, it is here, in these verses. If Ireland has not produced great poets in these latter days, she has sent to the world many songs of amazing sweetness and beauty and of quite unmistakable nationhood.

In her plays and in her books and in her little volumes of essays—some of them known far beyond the limits of Ireland—this voice of the people is heard. And it is heard with a great note of unity and with a beauty that has no mark of discord about it. There is a different tale to be told

in the nationhood that expresses itself in the Sinn Fein papers.

In the days before Sinn Fein developed the political side of its creed it was not making much headway. It was regarded even in Ireland as an intellectual movement pure and simple, and as a rather affected one at that. Partly for this reason and partly because the Sinn Feiners believed that the masses of the people were losing their sense of unity they decided that they must desert the paths of pure literature and take to active and even violent politics. Then came the rebellion.

"We had to do something desperate," a young Sinn Feiner once told me; "we felt that our people were losing those things that their fathers had handed down to them. They were becoming Anglicized. They were forgetting how glorious a gift it is to be Irish. The rebellion was a magnificent advertisement of our aims, and a great force in unifying our people and in awakening what nationality there was that slept."

This, of course, is only one explanation of those tragic days of the Easter of 1916, but it is an almost complete explanation of the type of nationhood that is now revealing itself in little newspapers published week by week in Ireland. The original Sinn Feiners were literary men and women, but most of these papers are badly written, badly edited, and badly printed. Their object is one and all to persuade the Irishman that his past is much more important than is his present.

Nationalist papers such as *The Freeman's Journal* are, I believe, honestly anxious to secure a better understanding between the English and the Irish, but these Sinn Fein papers are eternally picturing the past and making it impossible for old sores and old wounds to be finally healed. I have before me a certain issue of *Nationality*, the official organ of Sinn Fein. It is edited by Mr. Arthur Griffith. It has not much distinctive literary quality. It begins with a column of notes that are extremely hostile to England. It gives extracts from a work published in London in 1747 emphasizing British bars to Irish industry. At great length the editor discusses the storms that swept over Ireland in 1848. . . . *Nationality*, in short, reminds one irresistibly of the type of Protestantism that is so busy protesting against the religious beliefs of others that it has no time to affirm its own. It is a form of nationhood to destroy common enemies, but England to-day, despite its mistakes and blunderings, is not Ireland's enemy, and even if she were, good nationhood seeks to construct as well as to annihilate.

Turning to another little paper there is much the same thing to be found. In *The Irish Nation* there is an article on Ireland 150 years ago, and extracts from the repeal debates of 1834, deliberately intended to foster anti-British feeling. It is pleasant to turn from such publications as these to *The Leader*, a little review of current affairs

which is less violent in its politics but not less enthusiastic in its nationality.

It is curious indeed that the Sinn Feiners should be afraid of the forces that make for prosperity for Ireland when for years they have been bitterly angry about the poverty of the land. Ireland in the greatest prosperity that the mind could conceive would never lose her intense individuality. But the Sinn Feiners, fearing that she has become too contented with the measure of material welfare that has come to her, keep alive as far as they can the old flame of bitterness and refuse to picture England except in so far as she is the England of the bad and bitter years that are at last past.

But there are many shades of thought grouped under the name Sinn Fein, which does not by any means imply unity. There is the extreme republican section which demands absolute separation from England. There is the section which wishes independence in all things but the Army and Navy; there is yet another section which is not really Sinn Fein at all but which calls itself so because of disgust with the Irish party—it is really little different in thought from the advanced Home Rule school.

The old-fashioned Home Ruler remains in Ireland to-day in the prosperous farming classes and among the more conservative section of the clergy. Sinn Fein has grown in strength because it appeals so powerfully to the Irish appreciation of sacrifice and because it does stand for an intense nation-

hood. The Irish members of Parliament have in the opinion of probably a third of the country become too Anglicized in thought and habit to retain their hold on the mass of the electors. I believe that if there were a general election to-morrow twenty-five per cent. of them at least would lose their seats. Many Irish people feel that the Nationalist members ought not to accept their Parliamentary salaries, and that in so doing they have in some way sacrificed their independence.

The Irish party have done magnificent spade work. It is often the fate of such pioneers to lose their influence with the coming of younger men who lead forward along the roads which they built with toil in sorrow. It is also true that many of the Irish members after their months in London every year lose that power of picturesque leadership that would still endear them to their people if they lived at home. I have not heard it suggested, except by unreasoning and hysterical Sinn Feiners, that the Irish Nationalists are disloyal to their country, but there is a subtle sense of dissatisfaction with them in Ireland, a feeling that their day will soon be done and that newer, stronger spirits are needed to guide the destinies of the people.

Ireland was ready enough to observe the political truce at the beginning of the war, but when the Liberal Government pledged to give them Home Rule was replaced by a Coalition Government containing such bitter anti-Home Rulers as

Mr. Balfour, and worse still Sir Edward Carson, it was felt amongst at least a portion of the Irish people that the Nationalists ought not to have continued to support the Government. Some generous, utterly unmistakable word from Mr. Balfour and Sir Edward Carson that their position in the Ministry would not be used in any way to prejudice Home Rule, might have disarmed criticism. The word did not come; it was left for the Irish to assume that the Government was simply a war Government, and that with the coming of peace Ireland would get justice long deferred. Mr. Asquith was still Premier, and that perhaps should have reassured the country. But it is difficult to see how the coming into executive power of two men who had declared that they would oppose Irish Home Rule to the death could do anything but cause unrest and uneasiness in Ireland.

That, rather than the fact that Mr. Redmond helped recruiting, is the reason for the growing dislike of the Nationalists among Irishmen to-day. They feel that a stronger protest should have been made; that Home Rule should have been given there and then, or that some clearly-defined spontaneous utterance should have come from the lips of their two old enemies now raised to the dignity of the Cabinet.

Undoubtedly another reason for the growth of Sinn Fein is the use of that weary phrase, "the rights of little nations." Ireland was much more

a nation in pre-war days than Belgium. But since the war-cloud first burst over Europe she has heard the politicians making great capital of the independence of Belgium, of the rights of Montenegro and Serbia, and later of the rights of the people of Russia. It is not quite a fair analogy, of course, except in the case of Belgium. Ireland has the benefit of the protection of the British Navy and of all the resources of the United Kingdom. She has not, like Serbia or Montenegro, an independent army. But it is surely an unsound doctrine, a very desperate and cruel doctrine, that the test of nationality must be the force of arms. It was not so in the case of Belgium, whose independence was built up on the goodwill of nations, and whose independence will be restored by those of the nations who saw fit to keep their word that Belgium's right to an independent existence should be maintained.

But if there is not in actual fact an exact analogy there is an analogy of spirit. It appears to the Irishman that a great Empire that concerns itself about the rights of a little Catholic country like Belgium ought not to be indifferent to the national sentiment of a little Catholic country like Ireland. Irishmen have given their lives in the fight for the freedom of Belgium without guarantees that equal freedom would come to their own land, and the continual insistence on the rights of small nations has become increasingly irritating to Irishmen who find no echoing words to

uphold the rights of the Irish to independence.

The more intelligent Irishmen realize that there does exist to-day in the hearts of British politicians a very earnest desire to settle this unhappy question, but it is not wonderful that they should take a cynical view of it. They are inclined to believe that it is due more to a fear that British prestige may suffer in the eyes of neutral countries than to any real care for Irish sentiment. They contend that the anxiety to solve the Irish problem which is revealed to-day might have prevented the Sinn Fein rebellion if it had been shown two years earlier. The one point which they do not grasp, and of which the people of Ireland are generally ignorant, is that there exists in the hearts of the British, as distinct from the British politicians, a most hearty goodwill towards their country and a warm desire for the happiness of Ireland.

That, however, has nothing to do with the mind of Ireland to-day, though it may have much to do with to-morrow when the fact is realized. The point to note is that quite aside from the violent divergence of opinion which—in some matters, but not by any means in all—parts the North from the South there are a hundred shades of political faith in Ireland to-day. All these find their expression in one or another of the newspapers which litter the bookstalls, and yet it is to be noticed that in all this printed stuff, wild though some of it may be, there is practically no pro-Germanism. That may be partly due to the action of martial

law, and it is well to remember that there are pro-Germans in England as well as in Ireland. The spirit of Sinn Fein is not necessarily pro-German. As I shall try to show in a later chapter, there is sufficient goodwill even in Sinn Fein to make a better understanding between the peoples possible. Sinn Fein literature is more Sinn Fein than the Sinn Feiners.

So here is this perplexing contradictory thing which you may call at your pleasure the mind or the soul of Ireland. Different people, according to their pre-formed opinions, bring forward one or other of its expressions and claim that that alone is the real genuine Irish opinion. But no one who has travelled the country and spoken with many sorts and conditions of its peoples can ever be content with so easy a solution of the puzzle. No one indeed but a politician could ever think that one shade of these multitudinous beliefs had a right to stand for the whole.

And yet, deep down beneath all the contradictions, there is unity; and the Irish themselves are not unconscious of this unity. It must be remembered that an Irishman is not an Englishman with a brogue. He is a combative person, dearly loving an argument, not altogether unwilling to drive home his points with the aid of physical force. The mere fact that his neighbour holds one opinion is enough to set him seeking for some violently opposite opinion which he may make his own in order that life for the future may

be more varied and exciting. And the part which this spirit plays in the political activities of the country is not to be ignored.

But all of them, from the dour Ulsterman who nails the Union Jack to a pole above his factory to the most rabid Sinn Feiner who dreams of a republic under the protection of the United States, have the one great thing in common—the love of Ireland. It is Ireland they are worrying about all the time. There is in their hearts the longing that their nation shall stand among the nations, equal with all the rest. Even that stirring up of the mud of the dead centuries has that end in view. Irish nationhood is not unlike the tree bearing twelve manner of fruits. It you will be content to look only at the fruit you may well consider that you have hit upon a furiously incongruous forest. But trace them back along stem and twig and branch, and you shall find that one trunk serves for all. The deep interior mind of the Irish is loving Ireland all the time, and the little tender verses that praise the land come from North and South alike, from Catholic as from Protestant, from the virulent Unionist as from the man who is disguised as a red republican.

CHAPTER VIII

THE "UNITED IRISHWOMEN"

"CHEESE, my lady? Well, now, how would I be making it at all and me with no machinery in the place? And I do be thinking that it wouldn't be mighty paying to sell it——"

"But we don't want you to sell it; we want you to eat it!"

There came a look of resentful surprise on the pleasant face of the countrywoman as she stood at the cottage door.

"Och! that's a strange notion, to be sure," she exclaimed.

It was the remark that was often made in the days last year when the "United Irishwomen" began their great scheme for the production of cheese for home consumption. But there is cheese on the tables of these little cottages to-day—delicious cheese with excellent flavour, made by the very women who would not have believed, a year ago, that cheese could be produced except with complicated machinery. This is one of the changes that the "United Irishwomen" have achieved in Ireland. They have taught the women

not only to make cheese but a more important factor, to like it.

The scheme is still in its early childhood; it may be years before home-made cheese becomes a daily article of food in the Irish cottage. But a fine beginning has been made. Some cheese has always been produced in Ireland, but its market lay across the water; only a trifling amount was sold in the country towns. The "United Irishwomen"—who have been described as the feminine edition of the Irish Agricultural Organization Society—realized that home-made cheese would be an immensely valuable addition to meals diminished in nourishment by high prices or scarcity of foodstuffs. The making of Cheddar cheese was started last year with considerable success. But this is intended, of course, for the markets. The most important experiments were those connected with the making of small cheese by those utterly simple utensils to be found in the average farmhouse. The Society knew, because of the prejudice against cheese-eating in Ireland, that few country people would, even if they had the means to buy machinery, care to utilize their money to this purpose. But when it was proved to them that really good cheese could be made without machinery in any shape or form, surely they would at least try the experiment?

They did. Instructors were sent into the little villages to show them how to make cheese, and

the farmer's wife and the farmer's daughter set to work to try their skill. When the first cheese was made it was pronounced to be very good. The men-folk liked it. It was a welcome change. The cheese-making habit began to spread; every week the Society received requests for demonstrators to journey over the countryside teaching this pleasant phase of dairy work, and in due season it may be that the making of cheese will become as general a custom in Ireland as the making of soda bread in the past.

The monotony of diet in an ordinary Irish farmhouse or labourer's cottage is appalling. Irishwomen of the agricultural classes have not given much care to the preparation of food. This is partly because they are not naturally, like the women of France, clever cooks, and partly because they have had so little food material with which to experiment. If there is little food all the more reason that it should be of the highest nutritive properties. Home-baked bread, made of flour, buttermilk, and soda; porridge with plentiful supplies of milk; and cheese also made in the house—here are the beginnings of a healthful dietary. If the women can be persuaded as easily to make their own bread as they have been to make their cheese, and if the milk problem can be solved to an extent which will ensure that each cottage has its regular daily supply, Irish families of the labouring classes will not fare badly in the Ireland of to-morrow.

The "United Irishwomen" have done something to tackle the milk problem. But even their patient efforts have made little difference. I believe their milk depôts, established in districts where milk is scarce, are not more than twelve in number. The difficulty with these depôts is always to secure a contract for milk that will last over the winter months. If the farmer intimates that he has not the time or the inclination to cultivate winter dairying the Society can do nothing. The only remedies that are of material use are either to give the labourer more land so that he can keep his own cow, or to establish co-operative grazing fields, or to insist that the farmer shall rent him an adequate acreage of grazing. These things have been touched on in an earlier chapter. It remains merely to add that the very fact that milk depôts have had to be established anywhere at all in the country is sufficient indication of the seriousness of the problem.

Milk plays so great a part in the making of non-meat dishes and puddings that you can hardly wonder that the Irishwoman sees no possibility of variety in a diet from which milk is excluded. It is not that she is unwilling to learn, however. Usually she is much more intelligent and much more ready to admit her ignorance than an English woman of the same class. The teacher who is working for the "United Irishwomen" in the lonely land of South Connemara finds that the

women are only too glad to know something about cottage cookery. Efforts that have been made in the past have failed because the teachers expected too much in the way of materials and utensils. No teacher is really qualified to teach cookery in Ireland unless she has tried herself to make pies and pudding and cakes and stews and dumplings and savouries with an equipment of possibly one frying pan, one stew-pot, one cracked bowl, and one battered saucepan. Cooking for a household in Merrion Square and for one in Connemara are rather different things, but the fact has not always been realized by kindly-hearted ladies who have tried to bring a little domestic comfort and a little variety of diet into the cottages of the labourers.

Practical common-sense lessons in cookery and housekeeping are badly needed all over Ireland, and the best sort of lessons are those which are not given in some common centre round about a very modern grate, but over the turf fire in a wayside cottage with precisely those kitchen utensils already in use. Where such lessons have been given the women have been surprised and pleased to know, for instance, that pastry can be rolled with a bottle that once held a pint of Guinness, and that other utensils can be devised with equal success from the most unpromising material.

Very closely related to this needed food campaign is the encouragement which the "United

Irishwomen" are giving to cottage gardening. I have wandered over many parts of the Irish countryside, and it was the rarest thing to see the labourer's half-acre planted with anything but potatoes. The farm worker does not realize that he might border his ground with runner beans, or that a celery trench might run along one side of his land or that fruit trees might, with an acre, be planted to great advantage. Vegetables are missing almost entirely from his table, and yet, at little trouble and cost, he might grow all his own vegetables and add immensely to the attractiveness of his diet.

The "United Irishwomen" are anxious to make all these little holdings self-supporting. Certainly, the ideal farm should be able to produce its own butter and eggs, its poultry and its bacon, its milk and its vegetables, making it unnecessary to purchase things other than tea and sugar and flour and condiments. The labourer cannot do these things, but he could at least grow vegetables, even if he limited the supply merely to beans and peas. The Society is pointing out the food value of such vegetables, and is helping the labourer to grow them by making special arrangements for seeds to be bought from a reliable firm, at low prices. Instructors from the Department of Agriculture are helping with advice.

This is a very good work, for it is a cheerless and disheartening thing to look at all these little Irish holdings which might be so bright and

attractive with their vegetables, making more healthy meals, and giving the family an interest in the plot of land which potatoes alone cannot supply. If the father is so busy toiling on the land that he cannot look to his own garden, there is nothing so difficult or so laborious in vegetable culture that the mother and children could not manage it between them. To children brought up on the idea that a garden is a luxury for the very rich there would be a special charm in growing French beans or peas or cabbages or carrots, and I am sure that if a bigger scheme of cottage gardening could be carried out it would have the ready assistance of the priests, and would be the greatest value to Ireland. It is a thing that might very well be taught in the national schools.

Herb-growing has become a most popular branch of the Society's work. But this is undertaken either from patriotic motives or in the desire to make a little money. It has not the immediate importance attached to increased food production, and yet it may very well be cultivated by men and women who are getting all they can out of the land and who yet have a little time left for other work. In the country every woman who has a garden can grow the more precious drug herbs so greatly needed, and so well paid for by the manufacturing chemists whose supplies from Germany and Austria, and even the Balkans, have so long been cut off. The smallest cottage garden will grow sweet herbs, while those

who have no gardens at all can collect wild herbs that grow so profusely on the moist bogland or on the hillside or by the hedges in little green lanes. When the herbs have been collected they are sent off to the drying sheds that are springing up in all the counties, and here they are dealt with, and finally dispatched to the manufacturers.

The need for co-operation in herb-growing is sufficiently obvious. Manufacturers cannot be expected to deal with odd pound parcels sent through the post. They want their herbs delivered in tons. It is therefore essential that there should be common drying sheds where small quantities can be delivered and made up into great loads that, after proper sorting and treatment, are dispatched to the towns and across the sea to England. Herb-growing is the largest co-operative woman's industry in Ireland, and it has been taken up enthusiastically everywhere because it is something in which the smallest child can play a part, and in which even the smallest yield of herb is of value.

The "United Irishwomen" have many other activities. All their work is constructive social reform built up on much the same principles that have made the I.A.O.S. such a brilliant success. Goat-keeping, the rearing of Belgian hares for the table, even co-operative wheat growing—anything that has to do with a greater food production—is of vast interest to the Society. But it has its other side—the side which tends to build

up a better womanhood and a better childhood by caring for health.

Twelve maternity nurses are working under the Society in remote parts of Ireland at the moment. To those who know how utterly incompetent the Irish "handywoman" can be it will be easy to realize how great a blessing these nurses prove. They are all extremely well qualified. One of them is on duty in the Islands of Arran—those lonely bits of rockland cut off from the Galway coast by rough seas. Her work amongst these desolate women of the Islands has been, and is still, of the utmost value, and it is only want of money, as is so often the case, that prevents an immediate and widespread extension of all these great schemes of national welfare.

Another little thing which shows how anxious the Society is to achieve practical good is the beginning of cocoa feeding for hungry little school-children. Along the country roads you may see small girls and boys tramping some miles to school after a very scanty breakfast. Generally they get nothing more until they return home in the afternoon. With the kindly help of the schoolmistress many of them are now enabled, by the payment of a halfpenny or a penny a week, to get a drink of cocoa in the middle of the day. In almost every case the scheme has proved self-supporting and has not been backed up by outside assistance.

All these phases of national work make a record

which is surely very praiseworthy after an existence as a Society of little more than five years. And many of these are things which have been accomplished only in the last year, supplementing those permanent schemes which have been with the "United Irishwomen" since the beginning.

They have won the right to call themselves united. There are no unpleasant elements of religious or political rivalry or antagonism in their organization. I asked the secretary in Dublin whether a certain member of the executive council were a Catholic or a Protestant.

"I really can't tell you," she replied, "I simply don't know. We don't make any inquiries at all about the religious beliefs of our members. The Society is simply concerned with the welfare of Ireland."

That was her reply, and I know it to be true. I know that while Father Finlay, the vice-president of the I.A.S.O., takes the keenest practical interest in the Society, there are clergymen of the Irish Church equally enthusiastic, though the help of men is confined to the business side of the work. Priest and parson, Unionist and Home Ruler, Catholic and Protestant, work together with the most complete harmony in the "United Irishwomen." It is pleasing to know that Irish womanhood to-day gives such a lesson of unity to Irish manhood. Those who have worked on women's committees and in women's societies know how difficult it is to keep out a

spirit of jealousy and to get the very last ounce of goodwill and enthusiasm and co-operative effort that the organization should furnish. This seems to have been done by the "United Irishwomen." Under the presidency of Lady Fingall they have worked steadily and patiently from the beginning, hampered by the difficulty of getting money in a country so poor, but helped immeasurably by the spirit of friendliness existing amongst their workers. Ireland is all the happier and all the better to-day because of the "United Irishwomen," and woman's work all the world over should be the better for the example given by a Society which in Ireland, of all places, has shown so splendidly that bitterness and differences and old-time quarrels can all be forgotten in working together for the national good.

CHAPTER IX

FROM WICKLOW TO THE WAR

THERE are little villages on the English countryside that have sent all their menfolk to the war and their fame has spread throughout the world. Streets in the East End of London have their shrines telling of the great numbers of soldiers which they have given to the King, and I remember the day when, with touching graciousness, the Queen of England herself visited these shrines, offering flowers in silent honour of the men who had gone out to battle. It was a beautiful tribute to the gallantry and loyalty of the English spirit. There has been great rivalry between the towns both great and small for the most splendid record of devotion. In the towns and villages themselves, as well as in those crowded London streets, there has been another and even more intense rivalry between the different families. Women who have given all their sons to be soldiers or sailors stand out among their neighbours. There is veneration for them and a great kindness. There is recognition that

they have achieved a very real and important kind of fame.

Blinded by the fog of distance the very people most ready to give generous acknowledgment to such robust patriotism were the first to say bitter things about the neutrality of Ireland. It is true, and the most ardent Irish Imperialist would not attempt to deny the fact, that from a complex variety of reasons, many of them incomprehensible to the English mind, there does exist in parts of Ireland a certain indifference to the war. But does that mean that Ireland is neutral? It would be superfluous to write of the glory which Irishmen won in Gallipoli. Irish bravery and genius in soldiering have been shining across the plains of France from the first days of the war. These things are known and generally recognized. The aspect of the Irish share in the war which is hidden from English eyes is that of the life of the people left behind, and that is why I want to tell the tale of a little village in the Wicklow hills, a village which is as truly worthy of a place in history as those English towns which have given most freely of their blessed human material.

Six miles from Greystones, the coast town known to all English wanderers in search of the beauties of Wicklow, lies the village of Newtown Mount Kennedy. Some of these travellers may know the Greystones jarvey James Doyle, in whose cheering company I saw what war has

done to the land. Half a minute after I had settled myself with rugs in his side-car he began: "It's a terrible war. Do you know now, miss, I have a son at the front?"

"Have you indeed?" I said. "And is he well, and do you hear from him often?"

"To be sure I do. I'm after having a letter from him this very morning, and he's well, thank God." There was a pause, and then James added simply, "It would be a sorry day for me if I hadn't a son to fight for Ireland."

Along the way to Newtown Mount Kennedy it is almost as the English countryside: peaceful, very pleasant and lovely. There are the big houses of the well-to-do on the hillside, with their neat gardens and their atmosphere of unostentatious comfort. There is the rich pasture-land and the little valleys making a happy shelter from winds that are always soft and fragrant. Behind, the distant sea, and in front the misty blue of the hills. If you look for a distinctively Irish characteristic you may find it only in the thatched cottages and in the musical brogue of the people passing on the wayside. But there is one bitter reminder of the days that are dead in a ruined mortuary in a field into which bodies were piled carelessly in the horrors of the great famine.

"That's Major Redmond's house," James Doyle began, pointing to a dwelling in a cleft on the hillside. "He's been at the front these many days. Do you see that big white house way up

on the top of the hill? Why, the son's been a prisoner in Germany since the very beginning of the war. And across the distance—do you see the house?—why, it was there that the most dreadful thing did surely happen. It was a young officer on leave and he was killed in the garden of his home with an exploding bomb. And . . ."

So all the way James, whose people have dwelt beneath the shadow of the Wicklow Hills for countless years, told me little stories of sorrow, of partings and of home-comings, the dear tragic familiar ways of war that may bridge at last the great river of misunderstanding between the people of the sister isles since they have given to all hearts a common experience, to all tongues a common language.

The village of Newtown Mount Kennedy is a curly street with an imposing Protestant church at one end and a Catholic chapel at the other. The doors of the chapel were open wide to the winds and there came a trace of the fragrance of incense as we passed. There is nothing traditional or of peculiar interest in the village. It has not a gabled house or a thirteenth-century inn to give it a note of character. There are no shrines in the village street. In the chapel at Trim in the County Meath I have seen a roll of honour such as is dear to the English heart. But there is no roll of honour in this quiet sanctuary. There are no illuminated cards in the cottage windows telling of family sacrifice and loyalty.

There is nothing at all in Newtown Mount Kennedy to tell the unseeing mind that it is different in any way from any other village in Ireland. The hurried traveller would pass through the lines of the houses unconscious of the splendour of the people.

Taking the village with a radius of half a mile round the population in the beginning of the war was about three hundred. Ot this number close on a hundred men were of or near military age. With one solitary exception every family in this area has given all its fit men to the service of the Army. Out of this small population ninety-five men voluntarily enlisted months ago, long before Englishmen were conscripted. Some of them, indeed, suddenly discovered, as Englishmen discovered in the early days of the war, that they were under and not over forty. Others crippled or ill or of weak physique persuaded the doctors that their ailments were temporary. The manhood of the village splendidly, with great enthusiasm and the most shining loyalty, offered itself to the King's Army. And this not in England, where the Union Jack stands for unity and liberty, but in a little Irish village where the flag of the Empire has seldom been symbolical of justice and good faith.

I think that perhaps in its quiet glory Newtown Mount Kennedy is the living and unending answer to the question of Ireland's neutrality.

Nine men from the village are dead, but the

sorrow has within it the comfort of a great pride. Every one in the place rejoiced when it was known that one of the men had been mentioned in dispatches, and when the soldiers come home on leave there is something very like a general holiday.

There is nothing extraordinary to tell of the village because in these days of warfare unusual heroism has become the accustomed, everyday way of life as completely, if not as generally, in Ireland as in England. There is, for instance, the story of the little postmistress at Kilpedder, close by the village. It is not a remarkable story but it has a simplicity and a wealth of gentle bravery. She is a mother whose three sons are all "at the war." With the help of her one daughter she has to conduct the business of the post office, the affairs of the little shop attached to it, and manage the workings of a thirty-acre farm, and she is a widow. It is almost impossible to hire farm labourers in a district so depleted of men. But she does not complain. She is even indignant when she is told of some labourer in another village, strongly built and full of health, who is milking cows instead of fighting. A farmer herself, she is perfectly aware that the land must not be neglected if it is to yield the food that is so urgently needed by the country, but there is the war to be won, and men were made to fight, and in her direct philosophy there is nothing more to be said. . . .

On the way back to Greystones I stopped to have tea with the young priest of Delgany. High on the hill above the village is a Carmelite convent with pictures of the distant sea to make the heart glad. Here in the severity of their retreat the nuns keep vigil for the fighting nations, offering prayers to the Most High that the dead of the war may find eternal rest and that very soon peace may return to the earth.

Talking to the priest over tea in his study, I wondered how it was that there should be such peace on the countryside. I have memories of pleasant things which my host told me of the happy relations existing between Catholic and Protestant, of the fine character of the Protestant rector, and of the spirit of loyalty abounding in the district. "There is no bitterness here," he said, "no feeling of irritation or rebellion against England."

And indeed I had already discovered that that was the case, and I was wondering why it should be so, why in this part of the countryside there should exist such loyalty and devotion as England itself cannot surpass. Presently I remembered all the fine houses which James Doyle had pointed out to me, and the tales he had told of the going of the sons of those houses to the war, and it seemed to me that there lay the explanation. Later on in Londonderry I was to hear a story which confirmed the opinion I formed

on that afternoon, and the story had better come before the opinion.

On a certain day in last year there was a horse show held at a place near Londonderry, and two officers thought that it offered a good chance for a little recruiting. They went to the place and spent a hard and disappointing day. At the end of it they had only secured one recruit.

A few days later one of the young farmers of the district made up his mind that he must join the Army, and decided that he did not want to go alone. He went round among the very men who had refused to answer the call of the recruiting officers, and over a score of them followed the lead which he had given, and they are in the Army to-day. They were indifferent to the appeal of the officers, but they listened when one of their own people was speaking. And that is the way of the Irish. They respond very quickly and fully to the personal touch.

In these Wicklow hills there is not only the fine example of Major Redmond—one of the best loved and most trusted of all the Nationalist leaders of the day—but there is also the example of the young men in the great houses. They all went to the war and the people followed them, and their going has brought a change to the hearts of those who are left at home.

It is always difficult to know how far the tremendous realities of warfare change the heart of a soldier or the soul of a country. But in Ire-

land there is a subtle difference between the little towns and spaces of open country which have sent men to the war and the areas which are barren in war spirit. An Irish boy who has never left his land until he finds himself in khaki switched off to France or Salonika, is not quite the same lad when he returns on leave. He has mixed with Englishmen; possibly he has been under the immediate command of English officers. His inheritance of bitterness towards the British Government may be as keen, but the undefined sense of antagonism towards the English people is dead. If ever there was much of it, the experiences of war has killed it. That is what war does to the Irishman in nine cases out of ten.

I do not suppose for a moment that he returns to Ireland aflame with loyalty and burning with love for England. But you will not hear him say bitter things about the English people. Rather he will tell you a vivid story of the bravery of some gallant Scotch soldier, or of how an English officer led his men to great glory and with great daring.

There is a difference in the women, too. No one quite realizes, perhaps, the deep change that is caused by the letters of our soldiers. They are the most precious things of the war, and I am sorry indeed for the woman who has not known the joy of getting from time to time the letters of some soldier father or husband or

brother or friend, telling of the funny little happenings of war, of the spaces of great loneliness, of the moments of utter desolation, of meetings with strange men, of the coming to queer places unknown before, embracing so many corners of the earth. To the receptive mind such letters bring echoes from another world and whether the reader is an intellectual student of psychology or just a son-sick loving mother in a little Irish cabin, there comes a message and a stirring of the heart.

Unconsciously these letter reveal phases of the English character in its best light, whether the letters are those of an Irishman or not. God knows there are sides of war which one is glad to forget, and of which no man would willingly speak to a woman. But there are its glories if there are its shames; there is the splendour to outshine the darkness; there is unity as well as disruption. Glimpses of kindly fellowship and of great leadership come into these Irish homes. The women who hear Mass Sunday after Sunday, and often day by day as well, for the safety of their soldier sons, are not the women whose mental outlook is coloured with hatred of England. They know indeed that the land with whose sons their own are fighting has another face—the face of justice and of goodwill. . . .

Driving back to Greystones in the soft coming of twilight I thought of other places that have given generously of their manhood to the war,

and I thought of Irish soldiers whom I had met. I remembered the innocent-looking boy who wandered into the house where I was staying. He was barely sixteen when he enlisted in the Dublin Fusiliers. He fought valiantly on the Belgian front until frost-bite sent him into hospital at Etaples. His great happiness is that he has not been dismissed from the Army now that his age is known, but may still wear his khaki suit on duty at the Curragh. I remember, too, the man of sixty who journeyed to Drogheda to enlist, and who was bitterly indignant when his services were sympathetically declined. To him it seemed another injustice to Ireland. I thought of Mrs. Gearty in Scarlett Street in Trim, who gave six sons to the war, two of whom have already been invalided out. This street, just a cobbled way bordered with low cabins with tiny windows and thatched roofs, has given many men to the fighting line. "Arrah, now, we have all some one in the war," sighed one old woman whom I met on the roads.

No, it is not well to talk of the neutrality of Ireland. There are the districts from which few men, if any, have gone, but for these there are reasons enough to be found. And against them must be set the records of such places as these which I have mentioned and of many others: Neenagh in County Tipperary, Lisburne in Ulster, and many, many more. And have we not in England any places where, in spite of conscrip-

tion, there are strong young men idling still in civilian clothes?

"I like English people, miss." It was the jarvey. He spoke with the directness and spontaneity of a child. "It's a lovely country this, isn't it now, miss? I would not be so bold as to ask if you're married, but it's a fine land for honeymoons. Would you mind now, miss, if we were to give that lady a ride?" He pointed to an elderly nurse who was toiling along the road. She came on to the car and thanked me with gracious charm. I found that she had a son in the Army.

My jarvey was an honest man. His fare was considerably less than he might have justly demanded. When I was seated in the train at Greystones station, I heard the door open abruptly. There was the face of James Doyle again. He hesitated, toying with the window strap.

"I didn't tell you, miss," he said a little awkwardly, "that I have a certain weakness. I do have a fancy for backing a horse. I won seventeen shillings on 'Shining Button' yesterday." Then came a pause.

"Well?" I put in encouragingly.

"It's just this, miss. You're a London lady and maybe you happen to get tips, and I'd never hear of it. Would it be too much to ask you to let me know if you hear of anything?"

I agreed to do so if the tips came my way.

"Thank you, miss. Sure, now, isn't that good

of you? And don't forget it's a great honeymoon land." Then as he banged to the door of the carriage his voice changed, and he said gently, "And say a prayer for my son."

CHAPTER X

THE IRISHMAN AS A SOLDIER

ALL the world is aware that the Irishman dearly loves a fight. His enthusiasm for an active share in any unpleasantness which may be abroad in the world has sprinkled the history of Europe with Irish names. In the bad old days when there was no hope for an Irishman in his own land, adventurous youngsters would go roving off to the Continent and hire their fighting powers to any country which happened to be in need of them. There is no need to recall here the long list of the men from Ireland who won fame for themselves in past years in lands far from their own. All that is in the books, and it has no direct bearing on the conditions and problems of the present. My immediate concern is with the Irishman as he is to-day, with the men who have fought and are fighting in this war.

And in the beginning there is one thing to be said—a thing so obvious that no one has seemed to trouble about saying it hitherto, yet so impor-

tant that the general failure to remember it has led to a great deal of injustice to one of the bravest of the nations which are joined with us in this war.

Since the rebellion of Easter, 1916, there has been a tendency in some quarters to regard the Irish as disloyal, to picture them as desiring above all else the success of our enemies. Again and again it has been hinted, if not openly stated, that in this war the Irish are against the Allies. It is not wise to make such suggestions to British soldiers who have served with Irishmen. The truth is plain enough to them even if there were no long list of splendid work done by the Irish regiments cut for ever into the rock of history. If the Irish are disloyal, if they do indeed desire our defeat, why should they be fighting for us? Why do we hear of Irish brigades and divisions on our side instead of on the side of the Hun? Why did they not in the early days of the war take themselves off to Germany and enlist under the Kaiser?

Against the pro-German sentiment that is alleged to exist in Ireland you may put the splendid story of the 2,000 Irish soldiers at Limburg who, shattered in health by semi-starvation, were given every possible inducement to form a German-Irish brigade, and who valiantly refused to betray their King.

It happened that I heard the story from the lips of Corporal Thompson, an Irish soldier in

the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry. I met him at Tilbury Docks in the summer of 1915. He was amongst a big batch of soldiers released from the misery of German camps, because they were too broken to be of use to England again. He was wretchedly clothed, and I do not suppose the lines of suffering on his pleasant open face will ever fade. The Germans had broken his body, but his spirit was untouched. I asked him about conditions in the camps, and I give the words of his reply—

"Not only the Irish regiments but individual Irishmen in English regiments were sought out and given concessions," he said, "but we Irishmen sent a special petition to the Kaiser asking that these concessions should be withdrawn at once unless they were shared by other prisoners. In our plea we stated that in addition to being Irish Roman Catholics we had the honour of being British soldiers."

These words of simple dignity, uttered without gesture or an intonation of exaggeration, revealed such loyalty and such exquisite directness that I should have raised my hat in respect had I been a man. "Irish Roman Catholics, but we have the honour of being British soldiers." I wish that these words may sink into the minds of all foolish men and women who assert that the Irish are temperamentally and instinctively disloyal.

The story of the dastardly German attempt to

win the allegiance of these Irish soldiers is told in a signed statement by a young Irish non-commissioned officer which Corporal Thompson was able to bring with him to England. I give the statement as it stands; written in pencil on smudgy scraps of paper, it was not intended for publication. As a spontaneous setting down of a strange story it is perhaps of all the more value—

"On the 17th of December all the non-commissioned officers of the camp present at the time were paraded in a barrack room. A tall gentleman accompanied by a staff of German officers entered and spoke to us. He said, 'I am engaged on a dangerous mission. I am here for the purpose of forming an Irish brigade of the prisoners of war here.'"

"We were dumbfounded, as it dawned on us what he was getting at. He appeared to take special notice of me during his visit. I was the youngest N.C.O. there, and some days after I was sent for from his hotel at Limburg. He gave me a book and told me to enter up the names of the Irishmen in camp. . . . Mass was to be said next morning and all the men gathered in a room when our noble friend made his appearance and said it would be a good opportunity to speak to the men. He attacked our Government and heaped abuse on England and all Englishmen. Our fellows got raging and cries of 'Chuck him out' were heard, so after a few remarks he went out. Three days afterwards the priests

arrived and one of them had a parcel for me and one for the sergeant of the Leinsters. It contained food enough to fill a hungry person's soul with delight. Sir Roger Casement paid some more visits to us, and I was taken to his hotel and once more met the scoundrel. He at once began to talk about the Irish brigade, and asked me if there were any hope of its materialization. I replied, 'Surely you don't expect men who are fighting for the British flag to betray their country?' He said we were unworthy of the names of Irishmen. He then showed me a uniform with green facings and collar badges of the harp, which was to be worn by the brigade. He asked me if I were willing to become a recruiting sergeant, and I said, 'Decidedly not.'

"Sir Roger Casement has now an ally in the person of an American priest. The latter made it his business to question me about the Irish brigade movement. I reminded him that we had taken an oath to fight for our King and country, and he said that we were not bound to keep that oath, and said, 'What a grand thing it would be if some of the Irish soldiers were to march to Berlin bearing a flag, "Ireland our country, not England."'

"The following day he visited us once more, but very soon perceived that he was in Coventry. We met him on the road, but took no notice of him. He went into one of the rooms where a hot-headed fellow of the Munsters asked him

what the hell he meant by coming near us at all. A fierce argument ensued, in which he was worsted, and he took his departure. I have not seen him since.—18.2.15."

To make any comment on such a story would be an impertinence.

It happens that I have in my possession a letter from a British officer serving with the Leinster Regiment in Macedonia. It gives such an intimate picture of the Irish soldier in his daily life, and tells so interestingly of what the British soldier thinks of the Irish soldier, that I have asked and received permission to publish it here. I give the letter as it came to me—without additions or alterations—

"These Irishmen are wonderful people. I have had three weeks of them now, you know, and I love them more every day. When I was ordered to come over here and become a temporary Irishman I was not a bit sure how I should like it. But now I am giving thanks all the time, and you must not be surprised if I come back with a fine fruity brogue, and shamrock growing all over me.

"Our reception on the very first day was so utterly unlike anything I had experienced before. The new officer reporting at battalion headquarters in an English regiment is made to feel his position rather acutely, to realize that no one quite knows why he has come, that the regiment was getting on very well without him,

and that nobody really loves him. Everythin is very frigid and business-like, and when he i at last permitted to explore his new home an find the mess he is still compelled to remembe that he is the new boy and a most unimportan person. It usually takes a week for him to fe even moderately at home and comfortable.

"But we twelve hungry and thirsty Saxon descended on these Irishmen, and were mad instantly and completely welcome. We had ha a long march and an hour of scrambling ove the violent hills of Macedonia in search of th camp. We were conducted to the orderly roon —a sad-looking shed made of the rustiest corru gated iron—and we were expecting the usua frigid routine. Not a bit of it. The C.O. cam to us and simply swept us into the mess an commanded the waiters to comfort us with any thing that our bodies desired, while all sorts an shapes and sizes of other Irishmen swarmed in t greet us, to tell us what a detestable country w had come to, and to force drinks upon us. think I am going to start liking this war.

"When we had eaten till we could eat n more and all the dust was washed out of ou throats, the adjutant shared us out among th company commanders in a delightfully casua fashion, and they took us off to be introduced t sergeant-majors, to be provided with wonderfu servants, and to see the houses that were bein built for us, while a limber went galloping o

over the skyline to fetch our kit. It was all so jolly and pleasant and friendly that we might have been deluded into thinking that this was an easy-going sort of army where every one did very much as he liked, after the fashion of some of the Australian regiments, but that night we saw the battalion fall in on parade and march off to do some night operations. By the time the last company had vanished into the twilight we realized that we had come to a place where the common business of us all was known in all its detail, and carried out with such precision as we had not found before. There would be no point in describing exactly what we saw. Only a soldier would appreciate the fine points of it, but it was something like hearing Pachmann play Chopin after being accustomed to the renderings of the village organist. 'So that's what we've got to live up to,' somebody exclaimed. 'Good Lord!' And indeed there was a very Good Lordy feeling all through our party.

"That first day gave the key to everything. These people are soldiers before everything, but they are happy, friendly soldiers. All the fine distinctions of rank are most carefully observed. The little touches of ceremonial are carried out punctiliously, and any shortcomings are noted at once and ruthlessly commented on. If one of the rank and file passes within twenty yards of an officer he salutes as smartly as a Guardsman. If any junior sub

forgets himself and slouches on parade the adjutant is there to say harsh, loud things to him. On parade everything must be exact and as nearly as possible perfect. Off parade—well, in my company we are already addressing our company commander as 'Bill.' It may not sound much, but my previous experience with English regiments had not taught me to do that sort of thing. Presently I shall learn to call the adjutant 'Bunny,' as the native junior subs of the regiment invariably do, and then I shall know that I really have arrived.

"And the men are really beautiful. Of course, one sees very little of them at close quarters, but that little is so very good. They are the cleanest, smartest lot I ever came across—and for a man to keep clean out here entails a certain amount of exertion. Our water supply is a mile away from the camp to begin with, and there are no laundries to which clothes may be sent. Each man has to do his own washing, and what would happen to one of them if he came on parade in a grubby shirt I cannot imagine. But none of them ever commits such crimes.

"They have another kind of cleanliness also—a kind which is rather amazing to one who has only known English soldiers hitherto—their language is not far from being as spotless as their clothes. You know how it is with Tommy Atkins, how he hurls adjectives about and decorates his sentences with all sorts of ugly words.

Of course, he does not mean anything by them —he has got used to them as signs of emphasis and that is all. But these Irishmen find that they can get along quite well without them, and they do. They are, of course, practically all Catholics, and that accounts for it. It accounts, too, for the fact that one never hears an echo of that lewd, indecent talk which forms seventy-five per cent. of the conversation in some English regiments, nor any of the obscene songs with which English soldiers sometimes amuse themselves.

"But don't be thinking that I've come to a sort of collection of saints. They are clean and decent in conduct and in speech, but on occasion they are liable to shift drinks with enthusiasm, and thereafter to cause some small confusion in the camp. Now and then a man will be overpowered by a thirst and wander off to one of the villages and treat himself to large quantities of a fearful liquid which is dignified by the name of cognac, and seems to send people absolutely crazy. That is treated as a crime of some seriousness, and when he comes back he has to pay the price; but the cases of men who get a trifle exhilarated in camp on canteen beer are very rarely brought up for official notice, unless they are altogether too riotous. It is realized, perhaps, that you can't expect men to be good in every way at once.

"I wonder sometimes what they think of the Dublin business. It was over, of course, before

we got here, but one occasionally catches sight of wild Irish papers which are still shouting about the 'martyrs' in gigantic headlines. Naturally we don't discuss it. Out here and with these people it is as though one were living with a family which had a son who got into trouble, so that it is not good manners to mention him. Now and then in the mess one hears a word about Casement [this letter was written before the trial and execution of Sir Roger Casement], and the word is always the same—a fear that the Government may find some reason for failing to have him shot or hanged. I am very sure that none of the officers, Irishmen though they may be, have one grain of sympathy with him, or, indeed, anything but hatred and detestation in their hearts when they think of him. Whatever may be their private opinions about the desirable future of Ireland, they have no pretty names for an Irishman who is leagued with the other side in this war. They class him, very exactly and definitely, as a traitor, and leave it at that.

"And so far as I can discover the men are altogether of the same opinion. Now and then the unsavoury person's name crops up in the course of the letters one has to censor, and I have never seen a word that did not express a hope that he would meet the proper fate of a traitor. Whether or not the Sinn Feiners will try to make him appear as a martyr I do not know, but they will have a job to persuade these

lads and their people of the saintliness of the man who sided with the Hun.

" Sometimes when I see the battalion on parade I'm looking at them all and wondering what they mean, and what difference these years of their life will make to their country and to ours, and I think of the hundreds of thousands of Irishmen who are in the Army to-day. I do not see that things can ever be the same after the war as they were before it. We will be knowing each other better.

" Three days ago we got one of those false alarms which are our only joy in this damned country. The battalion was ordered to get out in a hurry and go somewhere else. It is rumoured that we were actually going to the war, and every one was immediately and immensely happy, and the camp was struck in record time. Six hours later we had already covered twelve miles and it was past midnight. We were tramping along, all of us a bit tired, hungry, and not a little thirsty. I was marching at the head of the company, and the sergeant-major had been telling me tales of the work of the regiment in France before it came out here, and how it came to pass that two men in my platoon are wearing the D.C.M. ribbon. Our company owns two pipers, and at the end of one of the more desperate of his tales they struck up ' The Wearin' o' the Green.' These chaps of ours hardly ever sing on the march, but at that time you could

hear all down the line the chant and murmur of the words.

"Well, doesn't that somehow stand for Ireland? They were singing that song which more than any other I know (to be sure I don't know many!) expresses Ireland's sorrow and England's harsh cruelty and all the tragedy of the past—and yet they were marching to fight with Englishmen against certain enemies of England who have made it plain that they would be pleased and proud to have Ireland on their side. Ah, don't be talking to me (save us all—I'm writing with a brogue!) of Ireland's disloyalty. I don't want to hear about it, because it doesn't exist, and there are too many shiny things that do exist for us to waste time over non-existent darkness. I don't doubt that there are some noisy pro-Germans in Ireland, but are they to be set against these be-medalled marching men? It isn't good enough. Ireland is great at talking, and she talks in the most flamboyant fashion, but watch her when she starts doing things, keep your eye on her when she is delivering the goods.

"I can only say this, that my experience of these people has made me stop worrying about that nasty business in Dublin last Easter. And I am growing a conviction that if only our priceless politicians will behave like real men for once in a way, we shall yet see a Home Rule Parliament ordering the Union Jack to fly in Ireland on Empire Day!"

CHAPTER XI

EDUCATION

YEARS ago, when my father was a little boy in Ireland, teachers were so shamefully paid that in order to live at all they were compelled to accept the hospitality of the farmers—given grudgingly or gladly, according to individual temperament. My father has told me how the teachers divided up the year between the small landowners round about the village school. Each farmer in turn offered a week's board and lodging to these peripatetic teachers, whose salaries hovered round about £12 a year.

In these later days there is a little improvement, but how little it is figures show with startling emphasis. Seventy-five per cent. of the teachers of Ireland—most of whom are college trained—receive salaries of less than £2 a week. The conditions governing promotion are so irksome and so absurd that only 5 per cent. can hope ever to reach the highest grade, while 2,300 adult whole-time women teachers are paid salaries ranging from £24 to £28 a year.

The Treasury grant for education in Ireland is utterly inadequate. It is not sufficient to provide teachers with a living wage; it is not sufficient to provide decent schools with proper equipment. In these times of great educational progress in England there are still in Ireland schools swept out and cleaned by teachers who have to act as charwomen unless they wish to carry out their work in dirty, untidy buildings, and there are schools where teachers and pupils alike shiver with cold were it not that the parents, poor as they are, make it their business to provide a certain amount of firing.

Education in Ireland is controlled, so far as the elementary schools are concerned, by a Board of twenty members appointed by the Lord-Lieutenant. Except in the respect of fresh expenditure, which must be approved by the Lord-Lieutenant and the Treasury, the Board is sheerly autocratic in constitution. It is independent of the Irish Executive, and though its powers have not been abused to the extent that some people imagine, it is clear that a wise system of national education cannot arise from a fountain head which is designed on such principles.

It is eternally true, of course, that few countries get the educational system which they deserve. Inevitably, in a country like Ireland where there is such a fund of bright intelligence and quick perception, such a universal love of the things of the mind, dissatisfaction with edu-

cational methods abounds. But if Ireland is not alone among the nations in her yearning after a system more closely adapted to her deepening sense of nationhood, it must be remembered that years ago she was known in all the world as "insula docta sanctorum." To-day when the whole nation is awakening and seeking for a clearer and a better and more beautiful national life, it is natural that Ireland should desire passionately to reshape her educational system so that once more she may be known as the learned island of saints. And the existing system, if it promotes holiness, does not promote learning in the only sense in which the word is worth while.

The actual curriculum in the Irish schools is probably neither worse nor better than that of English schools. Under the Department of Agriculture, indeed, immense progress has been made in technical education. But with the best syllabus in the world you cannot get satisfactory educational results in badly equipped insanitary schools, with very hungry little children as pupils, and very very badly paid men and women as teachers. The school buildings themselves are frequently detrimental to health; the children, after tramping barefooted across the fields, are tired when they begin work at ten in the morning, and still more tired in the early afternoon. They are not only tired but hungry, and they are glad when three o'clock comes and they can run home and get some sort of a meal. The teachers,

living very frugal lives, without the opportunities for enriching their mental life that would be possible on an adequate salary, are possibly as tired as the children. I tremble to think what sort of men and women such an educational system would produce in a country where children have not the natural cleverness and quickness of Irish boys and girls.

Education is not worthy of the name unless it is in the care of men and women who know how to use their weapons. I have little but praise for the Irish teachers who have stuck to their posts so faithfully and worked so conscientiously under the most discouraging conditions. But it is natural that the best types of Irish manhood and womanhood to-day are not attracted by the teaching profession. If they obtain a University degree they look to other lands to give them a living. It is not worth while for a clever boy or girl in Ireland to become an elementary school teacher because of the scandalous pay; it is not worth while to become secondary school teachers, because of the competition of the religious orders. The powers that control the destinies of education in Ireland have taken very great care that teaching shall be the last profession likely to appeal to the intelligent, educated students in modern Ireland.

To understand something of Irish educational difficulties it is worth while to recall the report of the Viceregal Committee of Inquiry into Pri-

mary Education which was published in January of 1914. It dealt chiefly with the system of inspection, the rewarding of teachers, and the limiting of their action in political movements—with which phase I am not concerned. It should be remembered that from 1871 to 1900 the method of payment by results, at an individual examination of the children, held sway. The plan stimulated the teachers, of course, and certainly increased the attendance at school, which, in 1870, was 33·5 per cent. on only one hundred days. But inevitably cramming resulted; the instruction given came to be merely mechanical. To get the children to remember as much as possible, to stuff their little brains with facts and figures which conveyed no meaning—this was the teacher's sole object. His livelihood depended on it, and whether or not he were conscious of the inherent defects of the system he was obliged to continue it in order to get his daily bread.

All this was changed in 1900 when the method of class examination and inspection of teaching was substituted. But the teachers found their position little improved. The method to-day is to make a triennial reward based on the standard attained. This means that if a school receives from the inspector marks expressive of a certain standard during three successive years, the teacher benefits financially. But if through various causes it should happen that the standard falls

in one year, the teacher loses all the increments, not merely for that particular year but for the whole three years. This is obviously unfair, and the injustice of it all was commented on in the report to which I have alluded. The report recommended strongly that in the absence of directly adverse criticism increments should increase automatically.

To enumerate all the causes of complaints which the Irish teachers could justly put forward would not be possible. I have contented myself with mentioning only the utterly inadequate pay, the badly equipped schools, the system on which financial promotion is given—all phases that are likely to continue to turn away the brightest and best brains of Ireland from what ought to be the most honourable and happy of professions.

In secondary school teaching there is as little hope for the ambitious student. Most of the secondary schools in Ireland are in the hands of nuns or priests. Many of these teaching orders have done magnificent work. At the beginning of the last century, while Irish Protestants were well provided for educationally, Catholic schools received no financial aid from public sources, beyond the very small grant then given to Maynooth College. The Catholic children were dependent on the schools built and equipped by the private funds of these orders.

They were fine roomy buildings, usually surrounded by acres of wooded land, and though

the equipment was meagre it was found in 1879, when a grant for the secondary school education of Catholics at last became available, that the standard of teaching was quite as high as that in non-Catholic schools. Since these schools have come under the Intermediate Board they have obtained excellent results in examinations. That is not the best test, of course, but it at least reveals a standard up to if not above the standard in Protestant schools.

This is all very well for the pupils, but the existence in Ireland of so many teaching orders makes it very difficult for these pupils to earn their living as secondary school teachers when they emerge from childhood. Members of religious orders usually take a vow of poverty. I know brilliantly clever Irish women with B.A. degrees who are teaching members of religious orders. I have watched them at work. I know that they are immensely keen on their work, bounded as it is by all the laws and restrictions of the religious life. They are competent and they are enthusiastic, but they receive no salary. They have no possessions; beyond the barest minimum of personal necessities they hold all things in common. School fees help to maintain the convent school in all its aspects; should there remain a surplus it goes to the general upkeep of the order. Such schools, because there are no salaries to be paid to the teachers, can offer a first-class education at considerably less than

a day school with qualified teachers who have not taken a vow of poverty. If Irish convent and monastery schools were to employ lay teachers with the payment of adequate salaries, either the fees would have to be raised enormously or the grant for secondary education would have to be substantially increased.

Obviously, it is to the advantage of the Treasury that secondary education should remain in the hands of priests and nuns. If parents are satisfied with the state of affairs, if the standard of education is reasonably high, if the religious orders are content to give a capital education at low fees, why should the Treasury interest itself on behalf of the lay teachers? From the English point of view there is no answer.

It is not pleasant to criticize unkindly men and women who have been pioneers in Irish education. They have done a fine and a much needed work. But their continued existence is not altogether helpful to Ireland. Clever boys and girls have few prospects in Ireland. Those who would really like to make teaching their life work generally relinquish the ideal because they know how difficult it would be for them to obtain employment.

Something much more different from the conventional convent education is needed for the Irish girls who will have to build up their country to-morrow. To begin with, the education at many Irish convents is not sufficiently Irish. All the wealth and glory of Irish mythology and the

splendour of Irish tradition and the enormous human interest of Irish history are often ignored completely. There has been too much anxiety to imitate the English boarding school in the past; usually the worst and not the best features of the English system were adopted. Some religious orders are Irish in foundation and in membership. But this is not true of all. There are others whose headquarters are in London or Rome. In such Irish convents as are attached to these orders you find English or German or French or Italian nuns. Irish sisters are found all the world over. They are sent to the foreign branches of their order where their knowledge of English has an educational value, and they are replaced by foreign nuns, who may be very useful in talking French or German, but who know little of, and care less, about Ireland. It would be narrowly unwise to exclude the foreign element from schools, but the chief influence ought to be Irish. Convent schools staffed partly with lay teachers, or entirely lay schools, are more likely to give the special type of education that is needed to-day. A nation that is only just beginning to govern itself cannot afford to be content with educational systems that are the relics of days of dependence.

The atmosphere of a convent in which there are no secular teachers does not fit a girl for the modern world. I know that the convent atmosphere gives a certain reposeful charm of

manner, a certain good breeding. But it does not help girls to equip themselves for the grim fight to follow when school days are over.

"I should like to have the religious atmosphere retained in a secular school," remarked a Catholic mother to me. "I should like my girls to hear Mass daily and learn their sacred history. But I'd like them to be under secular teachers who know something of the world beyond the convent, who could help them to prepare for the storms of life. After all, unless they become nuns, the girls won't live all their lives in a convent, and they ought to be getting an education that will give them grit and strength and independence."

And these are the very qualities that the convent system cannot breed. Remember, in most convents games have the smallest place. The sweet-faced nun who teaches French or Latin so admirably cannot be expected to play hockey in her habit. The bare elements of physical drill, with a sedate and infinitely dull walk at midday, are the nearest approaches to outdoor exercise that you get in most convent schools. The splendid healthfulness is not for the convent school girl whose teachers are all nuns; she knows nothing of the fine spirit of sportsmanship which the love of games develops, or of the self-reliance which it breeds. I imagine that one of the first educational reforms under Home Rule will be to insist that games shall be given a proper place

in the convent schools, or that the number of lay schools shall be added to enormously.

I have emphasized at some length the position of the secondary schools in Ireland because they seem to me to be of quite unusual importance. If, with the coming of self-government, it will be possible for hundreds of clever children at the national schools to get scholarships, it will be more necessary than ever that these schools should be adapted to the needs of the new Ireland. Ireland will need to-morrow men and women of wide education and ideas, and the convents and monasteries, as they are framed, do not give that education. I do not suggest that Catholic lay schools will be perfect. They will have their faults, their lack of imagination, their insistence on detail, like English schools. But at least they are likely to be distinctively Irish. If they get a really generous educational grant they will attract the best type of Irish manhood and womanhood to teaching, and under the sympathetic guidance of teachers whose hearts are aflame with love of Ireland the children of to-day will get that guidance, that drawing out, that direction and help that will equip them for the great task of making a new land.

The syllabus at the national schools will have to be revised in accordance with coming needs. It would be a great blessing to Ireland if every little girl were taught something of housecraft. If a child is a real student, with a clearly defined

love of books, it would be criminal to compel her to spend most of her school life in mending clothes and making puddings. But some teaching of cookery ought to be compulsory; if every girl left school with a real knowledge of the elements of cooking the Irish homes of the morrow would be all the happier and much more healthy than they are to-day.

But these are things that are realized by thinking men and women to-day. They, who yearn for the coming of the new Ireland, know, too, how important it is that the children of Ireland should grow up worthy of the land of the future. With the powers that Home Rule will give them it will be their joyful task to remodel Irish education, making it more Irish and yet more wide in spirit than it has been in the past; forgetting not the things of the soul but planning an equipment that will send young men and women out to the world in joyful confidence. To such men and women the love of Ireland shall always be ground on which they stand, and their breastplate shall be their most holy religion, and their tools shall be the things which they have learnt in the schools of the new country.

CHAPTER XII

CLERICALISM

THERE is no Catholic more devoted to his Church than the Irish Catholic. Yet, one of the first things likely to happen in a Parliament in Dublin is the coming of an anti-clerical party. Such a party would not be composed of a minority of Unionist Protestants; its elements would be the critical spirit and the independence of men who, while intensely loyal in their religious faith, have realized at last that it is not to the national good that priests should hold in their hands so much political power and influence.

Clericalism, however, is to be found not only in the Catholic Church. The Presbyterian elder of Ulster can be as dominating and as exacting as the Catholic priest of Cork. Clericalism exists in all Churches, and it is difficult to define it. But there is an analogy between some of its most forbidding types and the more lurid forms of militarism. While the good soldier obeys implicitly the orders of his superior officer, he would rightly resent the military arrogance

which sought immunity from the laws of toleration, good feeling, common decency. Happily, even in these days of war, there is little militarism in England. An officer who exceeds the speed limit while motoring, or carelessly forgets to have his windows darkened at the legally fixed time, comes within the shadow of the law in exactly the same way as a civilian. If he is proved guilty, he is inflicted with precisely the same penalties that a civilian might expect. And breaches of good taste or abuses of his position would not in ordinary social intercourse be forgiven him merely because he held the King's commission.

It is not so in Germany. The German officer is a demi-god who considers it utterly unnecessary to observe the rules on which society has been built up. He is above criticism. His uniform is more sacred than a priest's vestments, and if his authority or his influence is questioned he is quick to insist that his outraged dignity shall be appeased by the infliction of severe punishment.

It would be absurd to compare the kindly, genial, hard-working Irish priest to the bumptious, wholly detestable German officer, but there is a comparison to be made between the systems that give such power to the individual because of his office.

The Irishman regards his priest with an intensely real reverence because of his intimate association with the holy things of the altar.

In spirit of contradiction, he may criticize the priest's minor failings ; he may talk about meanness here or a lack of consideration there or of aloofness somewhere else. But, because the priest offers Mass daily at the altar of God, because he guards the treasures of the tabernacle, because his hands are raised in blessing, because he performs sacramental rites and pronounces absolution, he is and must always be regarded as holy. You honour the King's representative, no matter what the personality of the man may be ; the Irishman honours his priest because he is a representative of God.

It is not difficult to see how such veneration, coming alike from rich and poor, may bring power to the priest. It must be remembered that in days gone by the priest was the only educated friend of crofters on the lonely lands of the country. It was natural that in these isolated districts, where perhaps but a half of the people could read or write, the priest should have been their chief friend and counsellor. There was no doctor, no solicitor ; the schoolmaster knew little more than his pupils ; the tradesmen themselves were of the humblest origin. The villagers were too poor, too oppressed, too unhappy to rely on themselves. The priest was often a man of their own class, but he was a man of some education, of an acknowledged position. It was inevitable that gradually there should have come to him great power over his people.

This explains why the priest in Ireland has an influence extending beyond the limits of his priestly office. It is hardly possible that such a power should not be abused. It has not been abused to the extent which some English people imagine. The evil is not in a grave misuse of such power but rather that it should exist at all.

The power to advise, the willingness to be of comfort and of practical use are lovable attributes in a priest. There is nothing so chilling and so un-Christlike as the priest whose priesthood is confined to strictly ecclesiastical duties, and who has no interest in or warm human sympathies with his flock. But the arrogant power which makes a man conscious of guilt if he dares to criticize his clergy is not the power which works for good nationhood.

To question the authority of the priesthood in religious faith is beside the point. Men and women who are Catholics voluntarily accept the authority of the Catholic Church. While they remain members of that Church they are naturally expected to observe its rules. If a secular organization has the right to admit members on its own terms, so surely has a Church. No one but the most bigoted and blinded Orangeman would attempt to quarrel with a Catholic because of the honesty and sincerity which makes him a good Catholic.

But in accepting the creed of the Catholic Church, a man does not accept, and is not asked to

accept, the doctrine of the infallibility of the priest. Beyond insisting that he shall help to provide for the support of his pastors and treat them with due respect, the Church asks nothing further. Yet there has grown up in Ireland a sense on the part of the laity that it is almost as big a sin to disregard the wishes of a priest as to miss Sunday Mass. If some material scheme for the betterment of village life is put forward it must have the blessing of the priest, or be stifled at birth. If the son of a cottage wants to journey across the stormy seas to America the priest must be consulted. If he declines to approve of the plan, the son stays at home. If the wife who is making a little money at factory work is told to return home to scrub pans she obeys. These are things that still happen in Ireland. In a thousand details of ordinary life, in matters unconnected with faith or morals, the priest's influence is enormous. If priestly advice is rejected or unasked the way of independence is invariably followed by a priestly malediction.

Indeed, there is no reason at all why individuals should not consult their priests as they would their doctors. But there ought not to be censure for those men and women who as devout Catholics prefer to travel alone in the ways of the material world.

I have, in all parts of Ireland, observed signs that the centuries-old power of the priests is at last to be questioned. Some of the more advanced

CHAPTER XIII

POLITICIANS

ALMOST as soon as the Irish child breathes the spirit of religion he breathes the spirit of politics. Long before the English child has any grasp of the difference between a Liberal and a Conservative, the Irish child's mind is coloured by a political creed. The little Irish boy or girl running barefooted about the lanes of Kerry, or climbing up the Donegal hills, would smile in shy surprise if asked for a definition of Unionism or the history of the Land League. But exactly as children who were staunchly British regarded their little pro-Boer companions in the days of the South African War, so does the little Irish Nationalist regard the little Unionist—as a being alien to the spirit of the country, some one utterly different from the rest of mankind. And in turn the little Unionist will echo phrases which he has heard his father use in some heated argument at home—phrases which are not in the least kind to Nationalists.

There could be no more conclusive proof of the fact that political strife infests the whole of exis-

lems as syndicalism, economics, capital and labour and the rest. I do not know if the programme at Ushaw has been revised in accordance with the needs of the day. But I do know that many members of the Society of Jesus and many of the Dominicans are making it their life work to show the people that democratic government, and a living wage and immensely improved conditions for the workers are things to which the Catholic Church is not antagonistic but which she has always zealously desired. The Englishman to-day is perfectly content to admit that it is a sin to miss Mass on Sundays or slander his neighbour, but he refuses to believe that it is wrong to be a socialist or to strike in a labour dispute unless he is satisfied that there is more in Catholic opposition to these things than the mere opinion of a priest. He takes his religious faith from Rome; but he takes his political faith from his trades union leader or from his Labour Member of Parliament. If that belief is questioned he wants to know why.

Irishmen and women are to-day passing through the same phase. Without a single exception all the educated, thinking Irish Catholics to whom I have talked insisted that a new type of priesthood is needed in the country. Maynooth, they say, gives the young student a first-rate classical education, but it gives him no foundation on which to build a knowledgable understanding of social problems. And the kind of clericalism which Irish

thinkers resent most strongly is that which in effect says: "I don't agree with your way of thinking. I haven't had time or wish to study the subject. But I am sure that you are wrong, and that it is un-Catholic to hold such views." Before condemnation it is only reasonable to demand that the clergy should study the subjects at issue. It remains for the individual Catholic to decide whether the points are those of faith or morals, in which case he is bound to accept, not the opinion of an isolated priest, but the considered verdict of the Church; or whether the subject is one outside ecclesiastical jurisdiction, in which case he trusts his own judgment.

Most of the clergy are really the friends of the people. I do not believe that they would resent the coming of a vastly different system at Maynooth. For, if they do cling to power a little tenaciously, they are anxious for the welfare of the people. The secretary of the Congested Districts Board in Dublin told me that without the sympathetic help of the priests their work would have been most difficult. One of the most ardent supporters of the I.A.O.S. is the priest on the chief of the Arran isles, who devotes his life to the amelioration of conditions in those lonely outposts. The Jesuits in Dublin are men of fine intelligence and wisdom. But there are numbers of priests who remain conservative; there are the men whose churches have prospered on the earnings of the gombeen man, and they are disinclined to sweep

away the old bad systems. It needs the fresh clearness of perception and the enthusiasm and fearlessness of young Catholic laity to hit hard at corruption in every form, and to hit the harder where the priests stand aloof or in active opposition.

But that is the spirit that is growing up in Ireland to-day. An example of it was related in the first chapter of this book, in which I told how a Catholic working man reconstructed the life of the countryside in spite of the hostility of the priests. With the coming of self-government there will be still greater opportunities for initiating schemes of social reform. In re-creating the land the young Catholics will have with them the best type of Catholic priest. The old-fashioned bishop, who is not altogether sure whether Home Rule is really a good thing or not, may be antagonistic. But the priests will be glad of Home Rule, and if they are wise they will not resent the growing spirit of independence which will come with it. Anti-clericalism will never mean in Ireland what it has meant in France—which is anti-Christ.

The Presbyterian minister in Ulster may find much the same kind of thing happening. He may find that he is not quite such a power in the province. I doubt if Presbyterian independence will ever be potent enough to make Belfast less like a city of mourning on Sundays than she is at present. But a growing questioning of the elder's power will bring a new toleration and a great big-

order of things. The Catholic Irishman, from force of his nature and through the influence of his religion, is a born Conservative in nine cases out of ten. The ideal of the Irish nation to-day is that of a peasant proprietary, which is at the other pole from the Radical idea, which tends towards communal ownership. "A little house, a house of my own," the words which the Irish poet puts into the mouth of the old woman on the road, are the words of the soul of the people, which does not in the least desire to hold all things in common, but does most ardently long for a little bit of ground where a man may work in peace on his own land, and reap the harvest of his own toil freely.

The representatives of such a nation have been bound through that political chance, accident, or tragedy—you can choose the name you prefer—to the English party which swings further and further from the point of view of its associates. The Catholic Nationalist is compelled to make common cause with the English Nonconformist, who is every whit as bitter a foe to the Catholic Church as is the Ulster Protestant. By the terms of their alliance the Nationalists find themselves supporting semi-Socialists and supporting measures which are opposed to all their instincts, and the consequence of all this is that they are losing their hold of their own people, if they have not already lost it.

Moreover, professional politicians become, more

quietness in all religious matters, and that peace and quietness will not disappear when her priests become the leaders and helpers of the new Ireland as they were of the old.

CHAPTER XIII

POLITICIANS

ALMOST as soon as the Irish child breathes the spirit of religion he breathes the spirit of politics. Long before the English child has any grasp of the difference between a Liberal and a Conservative, the Irish child's mind is coloured by a political creed. The little Irish boy or girl running barefooted about the lanes of Kerry, or climbing up the Donegal hills, would smile in shy surprise if asked for a definition of Unionism or the history of the Land League. But exactly as children who were staunchly British regarded their little pro-Boer companions in the days of the South African War, so does the little Irish Nationalist regard the little Unionist—as a being alien to the spirit of the country, some one utterly different from the rest of mankind. And in turn the little Unionist will echo phrases which he has heard his father use in some heated argument at home—phrases which are not in the least kind to Nationalists.

There could be no more conclusive proof of the fact that political strife infests the whole of exist-

ence in Ireland, if proof were needed. Nowhere are divisions so violently insisted upon, nowhere is there so little of that mass of floating, unattached opinion which makes for uncertainty in elections. A man inherits a political creed from his father, and he is not allowed to forget the fact. He is kept up to it, to the declaration and practice of it, as zealously as he is kept to the practice of his religion. In season and out he is pursued, haunted, exhorted and harried by a class of men who, with the best of intentions, are still to be numbered among the worst of the enemies of Ireland—the semi-professional politicians.

That love of excitement and conflict which is so marked a feature of the Irish character makes even the ordinary man a fervent politician, and those who have the desire to disagree with their neighbours a little more strongly developed immediately choose themselves as the unofficial leaders of their particular districts, and take upon themselves the duties of educating and encouraging their less enthusiastic brethren. So you will get some tradesman or little professional man who is recognized in his town as the great speaker of the place, and is to be found on every platform, and makes it a point of honour to drag the most controversial subjects into his orations on all occasions. The after-dinner speech becomes a furious indictment of England; the moving of a vote of thanks to the local celebrity on the opening of the local bazaar is a chance to expose some newly-

imagined injustice to Ireland ; a chamber of commerce meeting is turned into a political battlefield. We get such Irishmen even in England. Their desire to have a thrust at England is so intense that they cannot keep away from politics, and every time they get a chance to rise to their feet in public there is trouble brewing.

Under their guidance anything and everything is made to look like a political move, and the most innocent words and actions are deliberately misconstrued. If out of sheer love for the land, and with the most honest desire to add to its glory and happiness, a Unionist plans some constructive work or makes some gift to a village, the Nationalist mouthpiece is on the spot to interpret the action as political propaganda of the most insidious and vicious kind. If, on the other hand, the good work is done by a Catholic Nationalist, there will always be a Unionist at hand to explain the true inwardness of the move.

This sort of thing, besides being a very real hindrance to the internal progress of the land, is, of course, a sheer and distressing waste of energy, and as such it is a very fairly accurate reflection of official Irish politics as they exist to-day.

Theoretically the Nationalist Members of Parliament represent the thought and soul of modern Ireland. Practically there is in Ireland to-day an ever-increasing sense of dissatisfaction with the Irish party, and a great tendency on the part of the better sort of Irishmen to ignore it alto-

gether. It seems certain, as I have already pointed out, that if there were a general election to-morrow, fully 25 per cent. of the Irish M.P.'s would lose their seats, and probably Mr. Redmond would be among the defeated. The Nationalists still hold the allegiance of the farmers, but that is from no conviction that they are valuable friends of agriculture. It is much more due to a desire for freedom from political upheavals. The farmers have come to their days of plenty, at the end of the long, hard struggle of the years, and they do not want to be disturbed. They desire urgently to be left in peace to grow ever greater crops and to reap ever richer harvests. The state of their bank balances interests them more at the moment than the form of government of the land, and they would be quite content to leave Mr. Redmond and the rest of the party to get Home Rule in their own way and their own time.

And here is another of those queer contradictions which flourish so amazingly in Irish politics. It is the sheer conservatism of the farmers which keeps them loyal to the official party at this time, and it is the entanglement of that party with English Radicalism which has done more than almost anything to discredit it in the eyes of the people of Ireland.

The chance that made English Tories decide for Unionism and English Radicals range themselves on the side of Home Rule has made the maddest havoc of what would seem the natural

order of things. The Catholic Irishman, from force of his nature and through the influence of his religion, is a born Conservative in nine cases out of ten. The ideal of the Irish nation to-day is that of a peasant proprietary, which is at the other pole from the Radical idea, which tends towards communal ownership. "A little house, a house of my own," the words which the Irish poet puts into the mouth of the old woman on the road, are the words of the soul of the people, which does not in the least desire to hold all things in common, but does most ardently long for a little bit of ground where a man may work in peace on his own land, and reap the harvest of his own toil freely.

The representatives of such a nation have been bound through that political chance, accident, or tragedy—you can choose the name you prefer—to the English party which swings further and further from the point of view of its associates. The Catholic Nationalist is compelled to make common cause with the English Nonconformist, who is every whit as bitter a foe to the Catholic Church as is the Ulster Protestant. By the terms of their alliance the Nationalists find themselves supporting semi-Socialists and supporting measures which are opposed to all their instincts, and the consequence of all this is that they are losing their hold of their own people, if they have not already lost it.

Moreover, professional politicians become, more

or less rapidly but quite inevitably, the slaves of their past lives. When once a leader has taken up a position in respect of any matter, it is one of the hardest of tasks for him to break away from his own words and to start out afresh along a new line, and few men have the courage to make a meal in public of their own words and to adopt what they may clearly perceive to be a more reasonable and useful attitude. It is impossible, of course, to tell what may be the outcome of the fresh attempt to settle the Irish question which is being made at this time of writing, but the fact must be noted that by their adherence to the "All or None" policy the Nationalists have lost thousands of their supporters. I have talked with many people in Ireland—Government officials, distinguished priests, solicitors, labourers, business men, farmers, tradesmen, landed proprietors —men of every class, and I have never once heard it seriously suggested, except from extreme Sinn Feiners, that the coercion of Ulster was essential. People realize, of course, that it would be much better if Ulster came into the Home Rule scheme, so that there might come to the Parliament in Dublin the representatives not of three but of four provinces, but it is also realized that an Ulster which had been coerced into accepting Home Rule—if such a thing be possible—would be an infinitely greater danger than an Ulster left free to watch the working of the scheme and to come in later or to stay out at her pleasure.

Thinking Irishmen to-day are very reasonably contending that Home Rule will be such a success that after a little while Ulster will be simply clamouring for a place in the new order. Mr. Redmond, on the other hand, seems, or has seemed in the past, to be determined to eat no bread unless he can have the whole loaf, failing to realize that many of his followers would be very glad to have the three-quarters to go on with.

I know the arguments against the exclusion of Ulster. Nationalists and Sinn Feiners alike have assured me that it would be a bad thing for Ireland, accentuating the division between North and South, building higher than ever the wall that divides the people. Most certainly this opinion exists and is even widely held, but there is, as I have said, that other opinion which is willing to consent to the exclusion, having faith that the success of the new order will do more than any other force could possibly achieve to make Ireland a whole at the last.

And the holders of this view have their own quarrel with the official party. They are even inclined to accuse them of being lukewarm and of caring far more for their salaries as Members of the English Parliament than for Ireland. They will go so far upon occasion as to declare that many of the Irish M.P.'s are well aware that with the coming of Home Rule they would lose their occupation, and that in consequence they seek to delay rather than to hasten the change which they

were commissioned to obtain. This view may be unfair, but it is certainly held in many quarters, and it must be said that at times the tactics of the Nationalists in the House of Commons make it seem almost reasonable.

It is at least certain that the continual postponement of the settling of the Irish question has had a desperately bad effect. There are many men who might be working at this time intelligently and constructively for their country under a scheme of self-government, but who are now wasting their energies in Sinn Fein, simply because they have no hope that their representatives in Parliament will ever obtain for them that independence of action which they think so necessary to their country.

So it has come to pass that the Irish Members of Parliament to-day represent hardly any one but themselves and the sprinkling of noisy orators who are scattered through the country. Irish politics at present are noisy, troublesome, and very generally meaningless. The old forms and traditions of strife are kept up; the people are encouraged to spend their time and energy over them; but the old reality has departed from the quarrelling, and Irishmen of the better sort have realized that salvation for their country is not to be won by struggling in the old-fashioned political arena. They see, as the outsider can see only too clearly, that the professional and semi-professional politicians are not really the friends of Ireland,

that they are indeed in a very real and exact sense her enemies.

This realization has led to two exactly opposite kinds of action. On the one hand it has sent a considerable number of the more fiery and less practical spirits into the Sinn Fein movement, and on the other it has convinced an even larger number that the one thing worth doing is to toil for the secular amelioration of conditions for their countrymen, and set them working quietly but with unfailing devotion in such bodies as the Irish Agricultural Organization Society, where their work, hampered though it is at times by the old political troubles among the people whom they seek to benefit, is of great and permanent value, and has proved beyond all question that it is possible for Irishmen of opposing views to work together in perfect harmony for the common good.

Their work, of course, is unobtrusive and not appreciated at its proper value by the people for whom it is performed. The average Irishman has to have a hero—preferably a martyr—if he is to be really stirred, and it is for that reason that men are speaking with admiration of Sinn Fein to-day who would only have sneered at the movement a year ago. The Dublin rebellion, with its aftermath of courts-martial and shooting, was meant to advertise the movement, and the authorities did their best to make the advertisement a success. In a general way a dead Irishman is worth far more to the cause for which he suffered

than half a dozen live ones. The living man might and probably would have made mistakes, but the dead can do no wrong, alienate no sympathies, disappoint no supporters. They stand. very pitiful and terrible figures, having significance and power that the living could not attain, There is a book on the Irish rebellion, which was published in America, and contains as a foreword a poem by George Russell, better known as "A. E." There are four lines which make very clear the present Irish attitude to the men who were shot for their share in the rising—

> I listened to much talk from you,
> Thomas MacDonagh, and it seemed
> The words were idle, but they grew
> To nobleness, by death redeemed.

So has it been all through the land. Men who sneered at Sinn Fein as the foolish product of a number of intellectual cranks, having no relation to the ordinary business of living, are to-day speaking with reverence of the dead, and with affection of the living. It needs no prophetic powers to see that if there is much more delay in settling the Irish question the movement will have attained a power which will make very nearly impossible any kind of settlement which could be in the least acceptable to England.

It is occasionally contended by the people who see only the variegated folly and obstructiveness of the professional Irish politicians that a Parliament composed of such people would run any

country into ruin at a gallop. Over and over again in the old days before the war one heard it stated that the Irish were not fit to govern themselves. The men of Ulster in particular were fond of making the point and of praying to be delivered from the follies of the people of the other three provinces. Many honest and serious Englishmen to-day feel that they have a sort of Heaven-sent mission to save the Irish from themselves.

Here again is that truth made plain that her politicians are among the greatest enemies of Ireland. For, as any student of Irish matters knows thoroughly well, the men who go to Westminster are, with very few exceptions, just the men who would not be sent to a Parliament in Dublin. The best, the really valuable Irishmen, are far too busy working for their country to waste their time at St. Stephen's. The British House of Commons has no magic for them. They realize quite clearly that it is no place for them, and so they stand aside from political life altogether, and content themselves with the practical work to which I have referred. But an Irish Parliament would be a very different matter. Such an assembly, devoted to the service of the country, would give them the opportunities they seek for working effectually for their country. Once they came forward the power of those others who are, after all, little more than promoted mob-orators, would vanish. The power of their henchmen, those noisy strife-provokers of the districts, would

dwindle and disappear, and politics in Ireland would come once more to be identified with real things, with the common ways of life, with the fate and fortunes of the people.

The fact is that England, having tormented, tortured and bullied Ireland through some centuries, has come in the last thirty or forty years to a real but excessively nervous state of remorse, and is possessed with an anxiety to make amends which has led, up to the present, to a deal of sheer stupidity in the handling of Irish matters. We have been regarding the Irish as singularly helpless children, quite overlooking the fact that they have proved themselves capable of initiating at least one movement, which has been imitated throughout the world. We have been afraid for their own sakes to trust them with the management of their own affairs. We have fussed and worried and muddled over them when what the best of them really wanted, and most certainly deserved, was the right to work out their own salvation. Only the other day an English paper asked, with the air of making a great discovery, why we should be content with imperfect solutions of all other political problems, and only in the case of Ireland demand that the solution adopted shall be perfect. The tragic fact is that this was a discovery. It is safe to wager that the idea had not previously occurred to one Englishman in a hundred.

In consequence we have done Ireland the con-

siderable disservice of leaving her to the mercies of her politicians, her professional politicians, that is. We have handed over the mind of the people for education to a body of men who, from the very nature of things, can only thrive by exploiting grievances. It was not to be expected that they would fail to manufacture grievances if the supply ran short. Even politicians are occasionally human, and there is nothing more human than the desire to retain a good job. This must not be taken as imputing deliberate dishonesty to the Irish Parliamentary party. No one can doubt that as a rule their intentions have been admirable, but their position has not been one to make for statesmanlike views or political perspective.

Well, their day is near its end if it is not already over. It is with England to say what shall follow them. Given an adequate scheme of self-government, framed with sympathy and imagination, and there will be the dawning of a new day in Ireland, with the rising of such a kind of politician as these islands have not yet seen. If, however, England bungles now it is only too obvious that the breach between the two countries may be widened just at the time when all the signs indicate that it might easily and happily close for ever.

CHAPTER XIV

BRITISH OFFICIALDOM

THE man who is appointed to govern Ireland spends nine months of the year in London; his election is due not to the voters of Ireland but to the voters of England. The chief qualification for the office is invariably an entire ignorance of Irish conditions, Irish hopes, Irish ways of thought. Yet there are innocent English men and women who asked wonderingly what is the matter with British government in Ireland, and why the Irish are so nasty as to dislike it.

British rule in England is increasingly democratic; British rule in Ireland is autocratic to the last degree. England gets much the type of government that she desires. In these days it would be impossible for the most designing of politicians to be created Prime Minister except with the support of the people. No amount of pressure from small political circles, no overwhelming personal ambition, no appeal from the Court would have put Mr. Lloyd George into the position of British Prime Minister unless it had been

quite unmistakably clear that he was either beloved or trusted by the people. You must have one of the two elements—popularity or the power to inspire trust. The Premier must be a man whose personal qualities fetch the admiration and affection of the people, or a man whose record and character inspire, if not hero-worship, at least a defined measure of respect and quiet trust.

The bitter dislike of the Court would be insufficient to stand in the way of a man destined to become the leader of England. Both Palmerston and Gladstone were unpopular at Court, but even the will of the Queen, powerful as it was, had to give way to the will of the people. The affairs of England, when all criticisms have been made, are in the hands of a man who has won the confidence of the greater number of the electors.

The same cannot be said of the Chief Secretary appointed to administer the affairs of Ireland. As often as not his very name is unknown on appointment to the masses of Irish people. They have no say in the matter; their opinion is not asked. It is sheerly a question of luck whether or not Ireland gets a ruler who in blundering fashion will at least try to understand the situation, or a man who is frankly a despot or a governor who uses his power for Unionist ends. Under the present absurd system, while England is governed by a man who must prove that he holds the support of the people before he is offered an exalted office, Ireland is governed by a man

who more often than not is either unknown to or cordially disliked by the people of Ireland.

Generally speaking, the Chief Secretary knows as little about the Irish as they know about him. Mutual ignorance is the only bond held in common by the governor and the governed. "The Chief Secretary in the course of his first visit probably spends a week—it may be more, and it may be less—in Dublin signing papers and eating dinners; and he then returns to England as wise as he came," says Mr. Barry O'Brien in *Dublin Castle and the Irish Problem.* Out of the fifty-four Chief Secretaries who have held office since the Union only half a dozen have shown themselves to be sympathetic to Irish sentiment, and these were Mr. Grant, afterwards Lord Glenelg; Mr. Lamb, afterwards Lord Melbourne; Viscount Morpeth; Mr. John, afterwards Lord, Morley; Mr. James, afterwards Viscount, Bryce; and Mr. Birrell. The rest of the Chief Secretaries were either callously indifferent to the welfare of the country or else unashamedly conscious of their intense British superiority, men to whom Ireland was much the same as Yorkshire or Northumberland, a bit of England to be governed according to English and never according to Irish ideas.

If British government in Ireland were built up on the lines of British government in England the defects of the Chief Secretaries would be counterbalanced by the sympathies of other ministers. In England each great department of

national life—agriculture, local government, education—has its responsible representative in the Cabinet, so that there is a constant check on the powers of a Prime Minister. The Premiers of England have not an unlimited influence because departmental authorities are responsible for the various phases of national life. Under such a system despotism is impossible, because the Prime Minister who made obvious mistakes or who commited grave crimes would have his wisdom or his integrity challenged at every point by his colleagues. But in Ireland all departments are represented in Parliament by one man, and by that very man who is forced by custom to spend the greater part of the year in England.

The Chief Secretary has either a direct or an indirect control over such important bodies and departments as the Local Government Board, the Department of Agriculture, the Congested Districts Board, the National Board of Education, the Royal Irish Constabulary, the Dublin Metropolitan Police, the Pensions Board, Magistracy, Industrial Schools, Finance, the Board of Works. The supreme court of appeal in matters affecting the welfare of these organizations is usually the Chief Secretary. You have, therefore, the humorous picture of the man who is head of the Congested Districts Board initiating some land reform, afterwards consulting himself as Minister of Finance as to whether he can make a special grant for the purpose. Or you may see him taking

counsel with himself as head of the National Board of Education on farming instruction in the schools before he shows what he thinks about it all as head of the Department of Agriculture. Even if the Chief Secretary were a man of superhuman energy and knowledge, and were able in some miraculous fashion to master the workings of all these highly complicated departments, there would still be no checks as between departments, no questioning of action, no healthy criticism of or conference between the various bodies. The Chief Secretary with ambitions towards autocracy finds them very easily gratified in governing Ireland.

All these inconsistencies of government are due to the fact that when the Union dissolved the Irish Parliament in 1801 it left the system of governorship untouched. Before the Union, Ireland was in the position of a colony with her own Parliament, but with a Governor representing the King. After the Union she was in the ridiculous position of being united to England for all legislative purposes but not for administrative purposes. Logical statesmanship would have swept away the Castle as well as the Parliament, and have put Ireland into much the same position as Scotland with a Secretary of State at work in London. But that was not done. The Dublin Castle system was retained, so that there became nominally at least two executive powers at work—one in England and the other in Ireland.

It is necessary to remember these things, because English people are so apt to take it for granted that Ireland is governed much the same as Scotland, and ought to be equally contented. The fact is that ever since the Union Ireland has been misgoverned in a way that would have been equally hateful to the Scotch, had the experiment been attempted on them. Apart altogether from methods and atmosphere, the very form on which Ireland is governed is not only fundamentally wrong but unique in British legislature.

Under such a system the most kindly disposed and well-meaning of Secretaries can achieve little good or initiate few real, lasting reforms. If he is honestly anxious to make the best of an impossible position he may come to be regarded as a good-natured fellow. The man who is supremely conscious of his utter ignorance may make mistakes and cause irritation and do no good, but he is not likely to do much harm. Ireland has had Chief Secretaries of such a type, and she has looked on them with a kind of sorrowful contempt, not unmixed with sympathy for the man who should have ever allowed himself to be persuaded to accept such an office.

Moreover, under existing conditions, it is absolutely impossible for a Chief Secretary to learn to understand the Irish nature. He probably knows less of the people than an observant English tourist who has spent a month on the Irish countryside. For while he is in Ireland at all the

Chief Secretary is in Dublin for the most part, associated with officials, and under the constant, conservative and deadening influence of Castle traditions. He has not the time to talk to the people who really matter, to see the workings of the various departments instead of talking to their vice-presidents, to meet the people of the little villages as well as the people of the towns. Dublin Castle represents Ireland about as intimately as St. James's Palace represents London, but it is Dublin Castle which claims the Chief Secretary's attention, and it is from Dublin Castle that he gets his impression of Ireland.

While he is in London he remembers that it is his business to answer all those inconvenient questions designed by members of the Nationalist Party or by interested Englishmen which are the trouble of a Minister's life. But what does he know of a rising in Mayo or the sale of land in Connemara, or of bad local government in the County Clare, or of detestable housing conditions in Dublin? These things have not come within his knowledge. He has to wire to officials in Ireland for information. If notice of the question is given in Parliament he has time to get an answer which he mechanically reads; if not he hands out soothing syrup in the shape of promises that "the honourable member may rest assured that inquiries will be made."

If you had all the enthusiasm of Lloyd George and all the learning of Asquith, and all the dis-

cretion of Bonar Law and all the reserve of Lord Edward Grey, and all the capacity for hard work of all their secretaries put into one man, you would still have Ireland improperly governed under the present plan. It is physically impossible for a man to study completely even one phase of Ireland while he is compelled to live for the greater part of the year in England. Even if he lived the whole year in Ireland it would still be impossible for him to master every department of national life.

I believe that no one is more conscious of the absurdities of the system than some of the late Chief Secretaries themselves. Mr. Birrell gradually discovered the impossibility of good government; he has admitted that with all the good will in the world no Secretary can make a happy success of Irish affairs under the existing constitution.

I make no criticism of Mr. Duke, because these are days of extraordinary difficulty. While he is neither worse nor better than most of his predecessors it is recognized that his appointment is probably the last of such appointments, a necessary temporary office until the time comes for the office to be abolished for ever.

That politicians are beginning at last to realize the utter futility of one-man control is in itself a sign of brighter days for Ireland. When you get at the top a man who, whatever his personal sympathies may be, is the slave of a rotten

system, the hosts of minor officials under him necessarily reflect the official spirit in concentrated form. It needs little imagination to see that such a system breeds red-tape prolifically. When the workings of every department are under the final control of the Chief Secretary in Westminster, irritating and disastrous delays are inevitable. The cry that Ireland should be ruled by the Irish is the logical sequence to a system which has provided one English head to every Irish department, and which means that the smallest detail of Irish life may have to come to Westminster for settlement. The official spirit which thrives on such a method of government has been amongst the chief enemies of Ireland, for while you can at least attack a barrier that you see, you can do little to knock down a barrier that has been put up by such intangible things as lack of sentiment and lack of understanding.

The minor appointments of officials in Ireland may or may not be given to men of Irish sympathies. Usually it happens that they are not, for you cannot expect an authority which is essentially English in policy to worry, for example, about the appointment of a resident magistrate. The fact that the resident magistrate is an ex-Army officer and as such a good Englishman is what matters to the official mind. It would not occur to the powers that control Ireland to look for a good Irishman for such a post;

it would hurt the official mind to be told that the Irish people might prefer to have the administration of justice in the hands of an Irishman rather than in the hands of an Englishman.

It is that almost undefinable atmosphere of hostility which such officialdom spreads that is so disastrous in Ireland. I do not mean that all English officials who are servants of the Government are unkindly disposed towards Ireland. Indeed, it might be that many of them would be glad to serve under an Irish Government. But they are victims of red tape to a greater extent than Government servants elsewhere, and they have not been taught or expected to consider Irish sentiment a thing of consequence. The perpetual sense of suspicion, the knowledge that one is being watched like a criminal, the feeling that utterly innocent things may be interpreted into anti-British or rebellious sentiment—these things are the result of the official spirit in Ireland.

The state of martial law which still exists in the country provides a still larger field for the growth of officialdom. I have been told again and again, not only by Unionists, but by Nationalists of years, by men who know the country intimately, that martial law is necessary, that it gives a sense of security to law-abiding people who were frightened by some of the effects of the Sinn Fein rising. This is probably true. If the English way in Ireland had always been the just

way, there would have been no rebellion and the need of martial law would not have existed. But, as an indirect result of British misgovernment, it is necessary. The Irishman of moderate views does not question the fact. But he is bitterly resentful of the way in which martial law is administered.

It is no reply to assert that the Irish are immune from most of those measures that have been accepted by the liberty-loving Englishman. It is true that the darkening of the streets, the early closing of shops, the regulation of meals, all these little things that affect the convenience and comfort of the ordinary citizen do not apply to Ireland. Immunity from special legislation, however, is no reason why martial law should be administered stupidly and unkindly.

Martial law is an offence to the spirit of the Irish rather than to their actual comfort, but it can be profoundly annoying to personal convenience, as I have myself experienced. As an example of the type of officialdom that works in Ireland I cannot resist giving a little experience of my own.

It has happened from time to time in England that I have had to make inquiries about recruiting. I have always found the authorities glad to give me information that would make plain the glory of some little place or the enthusiasm of some body of workers. It was not so in Ireland.

I journeyed to a little village which was mak-

ing history because of the splendour of its war record. I wanted to know exactly how many men had journeyed forth in gallantry to fight. I had the numbers, but on asking for a verification at the barracks of the R.I.C., I was greeted with the utmost suspicion. I left my card and drove away, and minds that were not official gave me all the information I wanted very gladly. But that was not the end of the story. The local police were frightened; they sent my card to Dublin Castle. Dublin Castle was frightened; it implored Scotland Yard to have inquiries made about me in London. . . . Eventually orders were given that I should be arrested. If I had not already left Ireland I should certainly have experienced the simple hospitality of Kilmainham Jail.

Scotland Yard dispatched a private detective to question me at my house in London; I was solemnly assured that, if I had not happened to leave Ireland, my way of living would have been interfered with most irritatingly. My explanations were considered satisfactory, however. The point is that if the incident had occurred in England explanations would not have been demanded; it is very easy to get arrested in Ireland.

Precautions are needed in war-time in Ireland as elsewhere. But British officials in Ireland have been used to regarding themselves as police to watch the Irish people for so long that the most innocent of actions are often misunderstood.

If civil law is administered badly, it is hardly to be expected that martial law should be administered justly.

Under self-government all these anachronisms will vanish. Departments which deal in intimate fashion with the daily lives of the people will be controlled by Irish heads as English departments are controlled by English heads. Supreme control over agriculture will be Irish. Supreme control over education will be Irish. Supreme control over local government will be Irish. All the officials appointed under the boards and department will be Irish, or should some Englishmen be retained in service one may be very sure they will be Englishmen whose sympathies are in touch with national sentiment. The atmosphere of mistrust and suspicion which has flourished in Ireland for so long will then have no reason for existence. Wherever there are officials there must be officialdom, but while British officialdom offends against the material welfare and the national feeling of the people Irish officialdom will offend only in details of organization. For it will be built up on the wishes of the people, and its very existence will depend not on the voices at Westminster but on the voices in Dublin.

CHAPTER XV

THE EXPLOITERS OF ULSTER

ULSTER has always been the tool of British Conservative politicians who have exploited her views and peculiarities relentlessly ever since Home Rule became an issue in party politics. Out of the labyrinth of lies uttered about Ulster from time to time it must have been almost impossible for the ordinary Englishman to discover the way to the truth. To the limit of utter weariness Ulster has been painted as the province of Ireland which alone retains loyalty to the Crown; as the province which alone is prosperous and industrious; as the province which alone sets an example of lawfulness to rebellious, squalid, lazy, and disloyal Ireland. It has always suited the British politician and the British Press to exaggerate Ulster's intolerance, not consciously, of course, for the rabid Unionist would not admit that Ulster could be intolerant. But the very insistence on Ulster's intense English spirit, the continual harping on Ulster's anti-national and anti-Catholic feeling,

has always had a false ring about it. As a matter of actual fact, Ulster is not so luridly narrow-minded as she has been pictured—unconsciously by the English Conservatives, or consciously by the English Liberals.

As I have already pointed out, the Ulsterman is intensely angry if you suggest that he is Scotch. It matters not whether he is a Presbyterian minister or a foreman at Harland and Wolff's, or an employé of the Derry Corporation, or a big landowner in Tyrone—he considers himself an Irishman. And it matters not whether the Ulsterman in England has not seen his native shores for fifty years—he is still proud of the fact that he is Irish. If the Ulsterman were more keenly conscious of English or Scotch ancestry, if he were anxious to look upon himself as English rather than as Irish, there would be little hope for the coming of a united Ireland. But the very fact that the cautious, industrious, rather rough and gloomy Ulsterman is as eager to express his Irish nationality as the warm-hearted man of Munster is encouraging. "Well, I may be a Unionist, and I may be a Presbyterian, but you can't deny I'm Irish," a business man of Londonderry once remarked to me.

It happened that I was in various parts of Ulster at the time of the threatened civil rising in the summer of 1914. Ulster was then crowded with politicians, English and Irish; with Lord Northcliffe's famous army of newspaper corre-

spondents; with a hundred disturbing elements. The sincerity of one half of Ulster's profession of faith might have been proved, but the manner in which the other half was manipulated to please the Unionists in England was utterly distasteful to unbiased watchers. Money, apparently, was limitless in the Ulster Unionist campaign of war; it was very different amongst Nationalists. I remember how I talked to little Nationalist girls in Belfast who were not provided with nurses' uniforms from party funds. Workers earning only a few shillings a week struggled somehow to buy white material out of which they could make their ambulance dresses; no sacrifice was too great for these sweated toilers when their Irish nationality was challenged.

I am not questioning Ulster's sincerity as a whole, but I am sure that if she had been left alone, if she had not been dragged into one of the most insidious and unscrupulous party moves of the times, if funds had not swelled into the country to further Ulster propaganda—if these things had not happened Ulster might not have emerged so unbeautifully from the great issue of civil war. She might even then have taken, as she is asked to take to-day, the great opportunity of helping rather than hindering the country of which she is part.

It was a happy experience for me to live again in Ulster for a little while, almost three years after those unbelievably mad days of July, 1914.

It was a pleasant thing to see the country untouched for the while by the politicians, to know that people can live in peace and quietness with their neighbours, to realize that the hostility and hate of former days were more the hostility and hate fostered by politicians than the natural expressions of the minds of the people. "If only the priests of all churches and the politicians of all parties would leave us alone, we'd work out our own salvation." I have heard the words and the weary sighs which accompanied them again and again in Ulster, and I know that to-day when the professional politician is less busy in Ulster than in most places there has been an increasing sense of goodwill that justifies the view that politicians are as great a curse in the North as they are elsewhere.

It is the tragedy of Ulster that sacred things and venerated emblems have come into the unlovely atmosphere of party politics. The Catholic Nationalists would be more willing to honour the Union Jack if it had not always been the symbol in Ireland of Ulster intolerance. Long ago the Ulster people used the Union Jack as a banner, not of a lofty imperialism or a fine loyalty, but as the distinguishing mark of their peculiar politics. In Ireland, the Union Jack, until the beginning of the war, had come to be regarded as a sheerly political sign, and as such it is little wonder that it did not inspire enthusiasm in the countryside that lay beyond Ulster. The

Nationalist in Ulster attacked the Union Jack for this reason; and the Unionist in Ulster attacked the religion of the Nationalist because it signified to him the rule of Rome. And so the bitter quarrels of the years, remembered and exaggerated almost daily in the Press, went on, and it was not until the great war came and gave other work to the Ulster politicians that a measure of peace came to the land.

It was in this atmosphere of peace—the peace which war has made—that I talked in Derry and round about Derry to the men of Ulster, and a thing was made plain which many of us suspected in those July days three years ago. We guessed then that the religious question was not the real difficulty. It suited the politician, anxious to win the support of the aggressively Protestant section of the English people, to insist with clamorous oratory on Ulster's fervent Protestantism and to picture her protest as a protest, and indeed a life and death struggle, against the Church of Rome, but that picture was hopelessly distorted, as any one may see who will study Ulster to-day. The Ulsterman of to-day does not share that dread of Roman Catholics which lives in the hearts of many English Protestants. He knows them too well for that. He lives with them and works with them. He is acquainted with priests, and he does not think of them as of dark-minded schemers whose one desire is to set up the Inquisition once again, to light again the

fires that blazed on Smithfield. He knows perfectly well that in the Catholic South Protestants live prosperously and in amity with their neighbours. There is no dread of a religious persecution in his heart ; I doubt if any such idea occurred to him till it was suggested by English politicians. His great objection to Home Rule had quite another foundation, and to-day that foundation is plain for all to see.

If you mention the subject to an Ulsterman, his very first question is, " What is Ireland going to get out of Home Rule ? What amount of prosperity will the country get that she has not to-day ? " There in a flash is the difference revealed between Ulster and the South. The man of the north-east corner is concerned first and foremost with the material welfare of the land. If you could make him realize that self-government will increase the commercial prosperity of Ireland, he would accept it to-morrow.

" Most of the Irish are sentimental," complained a hard-headed solicitor of Derry, as we talked of these things ; " they would let sentiment interfere with business if they governed the land." This feeling that the wealth of Ulster might be dangerously threatened is far greater than the feeling that the religion of Ulster might be threatened. I say this in no spirit of unkind criticism. The North of Ireland has produced men of a very fine deep religious sense, but it is unquestionable that the dour Protestantism of

the North has not turned the hearts of the Northerners so completely towards spiritual things as to make them regard commercial success as a secondary object in the way of life.

This sense of the importance of business is beginning to make the Ulsterman impatient of the political interference of all religious creeds, his own included. The man to whom I was speaking was as bitter about the political influence of the Methodist minister as about the political influence of the Catholic priest. He insisted that the twin curses of Ireland were the clergy of all denominations and the political agitators. Not so very many years ago the hatred of such a man would have been reserved for the Catholic clergy; he would have become eloquent on the subject of Roman interference and of priestly domination. But the man of Derry was anxious that all creeds should be held in peace, that people should be allowed to believe what they liked as long as they kept their religious views to themselves and in very watertight compartments.

As an example of how things really ought to be, I was given a picture of the local technical school.

"It's a fine institution," cried the man of Derry with a happy smile; "there's not a single priest or parson on the Committee. Boys and girls, when they leave the schools at the age of thirteen and upwards, come to the day classes, while adults attend in the evening. And what is

the result? Simply this: Catholics and Protestants are getting to know and like each other. They meet on neutral ground, so to speak, where it would be bad form to talk religion. The ecclesiastical atmosphere is missing. Boys who were brought up in the heart of a violent Catholicism get to respect Protestants; boys who were nurtured in intolerant Presbyterianism discover that Catholics can be quite good sorts. It is institutions of this kind that are wanted all over Ireland, and especially here. We don't want to be always accentuating our differences, and we don't do it, once we get rid of the priests and the parsons."

Perhaps in such an attitude there is a little too much materialism to make it altogether attractive. But it is a vast improvement on the intolerance of religious hatred which was promoted and exploited by the politicians. The man of the North may not be able to understand the more spiritual and artistic temperament of the man of the South, but he is beginning to see that religious strife, to put the matter on the lowest plane, is bad for the material welfare of the country, and for that reason, if for no more exalted reason, he is anxious that Catholic and Protestant should live in harmony.

Father Haggerty, who is senior priest at the Cathedral in Derry, assured me that in private life Catholic and Protestant get along perfectly well.

"But there is still vast space for improvement in public life," he remarked, and I know this to be true. The happy spirit that exists in the technical school is reflected in a big distillery in Derry, where men are employed irrespective of their religious beliefs. Some of the most important positions are held by Catholics, some by Protestants. The question of a man's faith is of no interest to the employer. The workmen get through their business with perfect friendliness, which again proves that free from outside interference Catholic and Protestant can set an example of unity in Ulster to the rest of the kingdom. But there remains the political element in public life. The Derry Corporation, for instance, employs Catholics in scavenging or as gravediggers, but positions above two pounds a week are invariably given to Protestants. As the tolerance of the private individual grows—and it is undoubtedly growing—tolerance in civic life will become greater, one hopes; and eventually even the Derry Corporation may not be too proud to follow the example of the Derry distiller whose works are so pleasantly free from religious antagonism.

The position of Ulster in regard to Home Rule is, of course, extraordinarily difficult, because the Unionist majority is small. Nationalists form 44 per cent. of the population of Ulster, while in Derry City the Nationalists actually outnumber the Unionists. "There is bound to be great

bitterness," observed Father Haggerty, "when the Catholics of Ulster find themselves cut off absolutely from the privileges which the Catholics of other provinces will enjoy under Home Rule." No doubt the consideration of this phase has hampered Mr. Redmond's policy more than once; if he has a duty to perform to the Catholics of Leinster he has also a duty to perform to the Catholics of Ulster. Yet there must be a limit to the operation of the law that says the majority must rule. Unless you are going to give a little parliament to every city and county, there must be some clearly defined limit to the system. If you begin with the axiom that rule in Ireland must be by majority you would set up a Parliament in Dublin from which Ulster would not be excluded. But in modern days the axiom goes further, and insists that rule by majority shall exclude or safeguard the minority. If you are to begin to establish a still further axiom that majorities existing in a minority must rule, you have instant chaos and devastation. Political schemes, or even statesmanship, founded on such interpretations of an ancient rule of democracy would be utterly unworkable.

If Ulster is excluded from self-government because of her persistent clinging to the Union there will be days of disappointment and sorrow to the Catholics of Ulster, but I believe that having suffered so long they will suffer a little longer, waiting for the day when of her own free

will Ulster will be glad to send representatives to a Dublin Parliament. There must be no coercion of Ulster. That would be a fatal mistake. But why not an appeal to Ulster?

I do not mean an appeal from the Nationalists, but an appeal from the British Government and from the very English Conservatives who, once so busy in the exploiting of Ulster, are now so eager for the settlement of the Irish question.

They did Ireland a great injury three years ago. It is not likely that they will be brought now, or at any time, to see themselves in their true light as the enemies of Ireland, but no impartial observer can doubt that their furious campaign was not the least cruel of the cruel things which England has done to Ireland. To-day, however, their tone is changed. Many of them who to-day see in an unhappy Ireland a blot on the fame of the Empire, were at the time of the "crisis" of 1914 among the most furious of the anti-Irish, determined to maintain the Union at any and every cost. We can only be grateful for their change, and welcome it as a token of the passing of one more of the enemies of the land, and there is no need to reproach them now for what they did three years ago. It is more useful to suggest to them the steps which it is in their power to take to-day.

An appeal from these Conservatives, backed, if possible, by a sympathetic appeal from the Dominions, even if the latter appeal had, for diplo-

matic reasons, to be unofficial, would have enormous weight. I do not believe that it would be finally resisted by Ulster. I believe that Ulster would consider at the request of the British Government and of the Dominions what she would scorn to consider at the request of Mr. Redmond. It would be the supreme test of Ulster's loyalty. It would give her the opportunity to prove whether or not she cared as much for Ireland as for Ulster. With proper safeguards as to her special institutions and her commerce and her customs, I believe that at this hour and in such a way Ulster might be persuaded to co-operate with the three provinces in rebuilding Ireland. For Ulster herself has come under the softening influence of the war; Catholics and Protestants alike have gone from Ulster to fight for the King; the suffering of war has touched the homes of the Belfast Unionists as of the Derry Nationalists. It is as obvious to the Ulsterman as to the Englishman that the continuance of present conditions in Ireland are bad not only for Ireland but for England. Here, then, is the time to make an appeal to Ulster, and here is Ulster's chance to show the measure of her loyalty.

If such an appeal failed the effect would be bad, I know; it would, however, show the nature of Ulster's patriotism. But it is worth while taking great risks when great issues are at stake. To be able to begin self-government in Ireland with the willing help of Ulster, to be able to

show the world a new country united in spirit and in form, this indeed would be a great achievement. If that is too Utopian a dream, there is at least comfort and happiness in the thought that Ulster is slowly changing, and that her new if tardily developing tolerance will in the end lead her very surely to the great building in Dublin which will stand in magnificence as the outward expression of a land whose peoples are self-governed, living together in the sunshine of unity.

CHAPTER XVI

AN ENTENTE WITH THE BRITISH PEOPLE

WHEN the Irish problem comes to be settled generously and finally, it must be settled not by the accepted standards of statesmanship but by sentiment.

Ireland is extremely like a child. She has the quick impulsiveness, the mercurial attraction to extremes, the warm-heartedness of a child. She has the child's unending capacity to be pleased with little things, the almost pitiful eagerness to be understood which is a characteristic of youth. It is exactly these qualities that have been ignored again and again in the long and dismal history of Anglo-Irish relationships. The great material improvements that England has effected in Ireland in the last five-and-twenty years have not touched the imagination of the people. There is more prosperity, greater material comfort, larger wealth in Ireland to-day than there has been for countless years. These things are not enough. England has given Ireland a contented body ; the task of to-day is to put into that body a contented soul.

After years of frigid indifference or blundering goodwill there is a deepening consciousness in England that to eliminate the element of sentiment in managing the affairs of Ireland is a mistaken policy. Wavering from time to time between systems of coercion and systems of concession, England is beginning to see that there remains the more perfect system of liberty and love; and her peoples, not only in her war-shadowed homelands but in her borderlands ten thousand miles away, are desirous beyond expression that at the last Irish problems should be settled not according to English but according to Irish ideas.

This, of all hours, is the golden hour for settlement. There has never been in the past a time quite so utterly right, and I am very sure that there will not come such a time in the future. Pessimists assert that the Englishman is utterly antagonistic to the Irishman because Ireland has not shouldered so heavy a burden of war as has fallen on England; that there is a sense of grievance in that Irishmen have not been conscripted or subjected to irritating war measures and restrictions; the general sense, indeed, that it is not fair that Ireland should have escaped so many of the sufferings of war.

Perhaps there really are people who are resentful because the war has not brought unbearable privations to a country which has sorrowed so deeply through the years, but I do not believe that there are many. Most men and women are

thinking more about Ireland than ever they did before, and they see that the wonder is, not that Ireland should have sent so few men to the war, but that she has sent so many; not that there is so little goodwill in Ireland, but so much.

It needed the soul revolution caused by a great war to make the English people begin to understand something of the Irish character. And this is what is happening, and it is a natural and a happy and an altogether heartening thing that it should be happening. The Irishman has never taken love of his land for granted; it has always been a living force to him, colouring all his ways of life, his ways of speech, his ways in religion. It was not so with the Englishman in those dead days before the coming of war. Unless he happened to be a sturdy Jingo, who made of Empire and kingship and patriotism a political creed, who believed, furthermore, that a Radical could not possibly love England, he was too phlegmatic to be conscious of love of the Motherland. He was more concerned about making money than about making nations; his crowded day gave no time to the vision of things unseen by the eye or to the voices that whisper only in the tranquil spaces of the night.

But when the great hand of war had clutched England in its grip there came a vast change in the Englishman's mind. Perhaps for the first time in his life he realized that such phrases as "for King and country" and "loyalty" and

"home defence" had their meaning. He saw the submersion of individual feeling in the great sea of nationality that rolled over the land. He saw his comrades set out to fight, and die if need be, for a phrase; he heard the restrained weeping of women striving to be brave because of a figure of speech; he saw the extraordinary but utterly beautiful picture of a land in festival for the living dead who had fallen in the fight; and in mourning for the men who were dead living, dwelling at peace, too mean to fight.

Dazzled by the newness of such things, the English mind could not at first analyse the change which had altered the face of the country in a single night. But there came to men and women, and even to little children, an increasing unutterable sense of the dearness of home, the home that was not a tenement in a dreary street or a painted villa in a suburb or a landed mansion but—just England. It seized the heart of the soldier as he took one last look at England from the ship that was sailing out to the war; it came to the mother who watched the train run away with her beloved son from some khaki-coloured station; it took hold of the nurse who saw manhood bruised in warfare of the most devilish character. It came almost to all, and it came to the very men and women who had laughed at Irish nationality. They began to understand—and they see now; and they do not laugh any longer.

And the strange new feeling came in all sorts

of places and under all kinds of conditions. It came to wayfarers in brown old towns in the English countryside; it came to watchers in dark cathedrals that have sentinelled the counties during all the years; it came to men and women in the maze of movement in some long city street; to workers in curiously smelling hospitals; to the lovers of gardens with prim little trees and old-fashioned flowers. All the little bits of England, all its phases and moods, and even its very faults, became inexpressibly precious. The forgotten glory of England shone again; its centuries of romance were remembered; the heritage of the ages became to every man and to every woman as a beloved personal possession.

And in that glow of national feeling that warmed and awakened the English sense of nationhood came the first perception of Irish nationhood, the first understanding that Ireland had known all along what England was just beginning to see, that Ireland had kept undefiled and in blessed remembrance through all her history the things that England had forgotten. At that hour the Englishman saw what had always been the difference between the two races—the difference between the English mentality, which looks at the world in a practical material way, and the Irish vision, which sees every phase of life with a certain indefinable spirituality of imagination. And he asked himself whether, after all, the explanation of those features that perplex the student of

Irish problems were not to be found in the study of the psychology of the Irish race rather than in the consideration of the political and economic conditions of the land.

It has come about, from these forces at work in England, that there is a greater desire among the English than ever before that the Irish problem should be settled justly, in accordance with Irish national sentiment. And there is a growing desire to understand more of the Irish people, to appreciate their peculiar burdens, their temperament, and their aspirations at their real value. The politician who says to-day, "There is still time to settle the Irish difficulty," is utterly blind to the jewelled moment that already exists. The time to consolidate the beginnings of an *entente cordiale* between England and Ireland is not to-morrow but to-day. There is goodwill in Ireland and goodwill in England. The people of both countries have suffered alike, if not equally, in these days of war. Alike they know the splendid banner of loyalty that flies high in the winds; together they are conscious of the dearness of their native shores. It is now, while these blessed forces are at work, that the sense of understanding should be nurtured and cherished and built up into a mighty power that will bind together the two peoples as they have never been bound before.

The mind of the Englishman, illuminated by the fire of his own intense loyalty, sees vividly the national sentiment of the Irishman, how much it

means, and how it is that an offence to such national sentiment has lessened the number of Irish soldiers who might have been fighting on our battlefields to-day.

I remember how Father Finlay, the distinguished Dublin Jesuit, once threw out his hands expressively and said to me, "If Ireland had been conscripted in the very beginning of the war, there would not have been a murmur. Ireland was more enthusiastic about the war than England. The Irish will always respond to a great ideal, and the picture of Belgium ravaged and humiliated touched our imagination to the quick."

I believe this to be true. I believe that while there was immense indignation and resentment in the English mind that a small neutral country should be violated, there was not in England precisely the exalted quality of enthusiasm that swept over Ireland. The Englishman fights for a concrete rather than an abstract object. His way of thinking is the result of the sense of sportsmanship that has been the dominant characteristic in all the centuries; he fights, not only because of the instinct to defend precious possessions whose safety is threatened, but because of the appeal for help which sounds across the seas from the men who went before him.

The Irish character is different. It is splendidly gallant, in some ways greatly chivalrous. But its sense of nationality dominates everything. There were soldiers in plenty from Ireland in the first

days of the war. There was something peculiarly appealing to the Irishman in the vision of a small Catholic country, such as his own, devastated and outraged . . . his heart burnt in anger when he heard of the insults to priests, to nuns, of desecration in holy places, of little children tormented and injured. But, with his profound sense of nationhood, he wanted to fight as an Irishman. When it gradually came to him that in the very fight for the upholding of Belgian nationality his own nationality was to be ignored or insulted at every point, his enthusiasm dwindled. He was not content merely to be absorbed into a British fighting machine. The Irishman would have fought very willingly as an Irishman for England, but he could not quite grasp the sincerity of the British mind that saw in unhappy Belgium an outraged nationality, but which expected the Irishman to fight as an Anglicized Irishman. To reflect on these points is surely to marvel afresh that we should have so many splendid Irish soldiers fighting in our battle lines to-day.

As the struggle became harder and as the call for endurance became greater, so deepened the love of England in the heart of soldier and civilian alike. And with this deepening sense of nationality there grew the understanding of Irish nationality, and a more just appreciation of those curiously complicated causes that have prevented Irish manhood from a more extensive representation on the different fronts. Would the English-

man have fought with such good heart if he had been expected to sink his nationality altogether and serve under French leadership in French regiments? The Americans who have crossed the seas to fight for the Allies are eager to retain their American nationality. The Canadian regiments have their special characteristics. The English people know these things and they are beginning to see how difficult it was for the Irishman to fight under British rule while his own little land continued to be the victim of misgovernment.

So in England to-day there has come the understanding of the Irish people that has been desired by honest statesmen in all time. If, at the last, attempts at settlement fail, the failure may be due to British politicians or even to Irish politicians, but not to misunderstanding on the part of the British people.

England to-day is fighting with three countries which are Catholic: Belgium, France, and Italy. If there ever was the sense that Catholicism is apt to enervate rather than elevate the character of man, that theory is disproved to-day in the endurance of Catholic Belgian soldiers, in the valour of the soldiers and the soldier-priests of France, in the resolution of Italy's Catholic troops. If only dimly, English people have become interested in the Catholic faith: they have a new respect for it, they are less ready to talk disparagingly of Catholics, more desirous to see the

good in a religion in which they have not been in sympathy in years past.

If there were no Catholics and no Protestants in Ireland there would still be an Irish problem. But to understand something of a man's religion when it is dear to him beyond all else is to understand a good deal of the man himself. Men and women who are discontented with ready-made ideas and study sympathetically the spirit rather than the doctrines of the Catholic faith get nearer to understanding the heart of the amazing nation.

Intense Catholicism is apt to produce a certain indifference to sheerly material things that might seem laziness to the English mind. You will hear an Irish peasant questioned as to a broken-down wall or a smashed window-pane reply light-heartedly, "Arrah, now, your honour, what would be the use of mending it at all, at all, and ourselves that might be dead to-morrow." That is an extreme indication of happy-go-lucky fatalism. I do not defend the attitude of mind that tolerates untidiness to-day because of the uncertainty of to-morrow. But I can understand the heart of the man who cares more about the tidiness of his soul than about the tidiness of his garden.

People to whom the things of the world unseen are more real than those of the world temporal do not put the same enthusiasm into the affairs of life as those who are more materially minded. That is possibly why the Irish are in the undertakings of business less greedy of success, less

eager to pile up great wealth than English business-men. It is not so in the Irish who have adopted other countries as their living places. The New Yorker will tell you, laughingly, that his city is run by the Irish. But in Ireland, where the spirit of the land is still the spirit of religion, the merely material counts for less than it does in most countries.

The Irish, after all, live in daily intimate contact with the things of religion. Theirs is not a Sunday morning faith. They talk with charming spontaneity and an utter unself-consciousness of Christ and the Blessed Mother and the Saints, who might be their great personal friends, sitting at ease in their houses. . . . It was a Sinn Feiner who exclaimed, "Give Ireland a Catholic and an Irish Viceroy to-morrow, and she would be content to leave Home Rule alone." I do not for a moment believe that the most gracious form of autocratic government is a proper substitute for the self-government that will carry with it the right to abolish the religious test in the appointment of the Lord-Lieutenant. I do not believe that the Irish think it to be so. I quote the remark because it shows how deeply and passionately the Irish care about their religion.

If tales are told about Irish hostility to the English people, it must be remembered that a little grievance makes a big noise in Ireland. It is only the discriminating and understanding mind which can grasp the essentials and distinguish

them from the non-essentials, who can tell when it is only Irish vanity that is offended or the deeper sense of Irish nationhood. If Ireland has not been taken seriously enough on many occasions—possibly on most occasions—she has been taken far too seriously on other occasions. The Corporation of Dublin refused to give King George an address of welcome at the time of his State visit; but the men of Dublin have not refused to become the King's soldiers in these days of utter need. To go still further back, there is the historic story of the famous Irish regiment which covered itself with imperishable glory during the South African War. It was known to have left Dublin singing, "To hell with the Queen!"

Even when the Irish have been most bitterly "agin the Government," they have by no means been "agin" the English people. The Irish have always liked the individual Englishman. Their natural grace and courtesy and their limitless hospitality have always made the stranger feel at home and happy in Ireland, and this has been as true of the English as of the French or the American.

An Irishman of Kildare, who has studied the welfare of his country for long years, said to me recently: "The Government ought to build a channel tunnel between England and Ireland and maintain it as a free passage across the sea. It would bridge something more than the sea if this were done—it would bridge the differences

between the two races. If the Irish and the English knew that they could come at will across the seas without paying a penny, there would be tremendous traffic between the countries, and it would do more to bringing the peoples together than anything else that I can imagine." The idea is so charming and so sensible that I am sure no British Government will ever carry it out. But it has a practical application. If it were possible to bring the business and working as distinct from the pleasure-making sections of both countries together more closely, the first step towards a solid Anglo-Irish understanding would be taken. And why not now?

Transit between England and the Continent is almost impossible for civilians in these days of war. But despite submarine scares the Irish mail boats are running with peace-time regularity. English politicians and Irish politicians have conferred together for years—it is surely time that English people and Irish people were brought into closer contact with each other. If English teachers could become acquainted with Irish teachers, if English trade unionists could get in touch with Irish trade unionists, if English farmers could talk crops with Irish farmers, if all classes of the community in each country could by means of exchanged visits get to know each other better, the dawn for Ireland would be very golden.

Lasting *ententes cordiales*, may, after all, be suggested by Goverments, but in fact they are

made by the people. Diplomatic understandings in which the people have had no voice are, as the war has shown so sorrowfully, as likely to crumble to dust as a piece of burnt matchwood.

I think that to-day the Englishman understands that sentiment is not necessarily feeble and enervating, that it may even be a great illuminant and an utter necessity to the Irish mind. I think that the best type of Irishman realizes to-day that the material benefits which the English Government has conferred on Ireland are an expression, if not the most perfect expression, of English goodwill.

It is the golden hour. With such a basis there is no obstacle beyond the obstacles which politicians invent to the making of an understanding between England and Ireland as cordial and as pleasant as the understanding which exists so happily between France and England.

The triumphs of British rule and statesmanship, the glory of England's great spirit of colonizing, the justice of the cause for which she is fighting—these things will shine down all the years. But there is a gleam that will shine still more brightly than the gleam of victories won on the bloody plains of France—the gleam of the little golden band that mystically and spiritually will unite a happy Ireland to a generous England in a union that no man shall dissolve.

CHAPTER XVII

PEACE IN THE LAND

THE real pacifists are the men who are fighting. The ways of peace are so dear to them that they are willing to journey out to dark and difficult places and to endure hardship and pain and death to win back the quiet of other days, that blessed quiet when men and women went about their business so pleasantly and happily, working and resting in season, creating, shaping and planning in all security. Our soldiers above all others are passionately anxious that the peace to come shall be a real peace enduring through the years. Having seen destruction, their eyes are yearning for the vision of recreation. They have seen the wreckage that was France and they have dreamed of the days when all the little towns shall rise reshaped and splendid from the ruins of the present. Having endured chaos, they are longing for order and beauty and comeliness. Their dream of peace is of a peace which shall be a benediction over all the earth, bringing at the end of this red anguish a joyful healing to all nations.

To all nations. Cannot we imagine here and now in the midst of this agony of war what would be the mind of our fighting men if there came, breaking through all the comfortable talk of peace, the tidings that one among the nations was torn with strife? Can we not see how heavy a thing it would be for any warrior of the allied nations to come to his home and find that the peace for which he had endured so much had not reached his own land? Is it not our duty to do all that lies in our power to lay such foundations that the temple of the coming peace may be erected flawless and perfect in that day of great consolation? Do we not owe it in particular to our Irish soldiers to secure for them peace in their own country, so that they may return happily to a happy place?

It can be done so easily. For many years English people have been talking of Home Rule as of a wildly revolutionary change. Very few of us have paused to consider the practical aspects of the matter, or to see what the change would be in actual detail. Some Englishmen, indeed, are not aware that there is a Home Rule Act in existence now—in April, 1917—an Act that received the Royal Assent so long ago as September 18, 1914. That Bill is only withheld from coming into operation because of the Ulster difficulty. It is ready and waiting with all needful provisions and considered detail, and those who think of its approaching enforcement as if it

would be a chaotic change should study its clauses. I find even amongst the most educated and thoughtful people a belief that with the coming of Home Rule all British institutions will automatically cease, that the whole of the internal government of Ireland will pass immediately into Irish hands. But this is not so.

The establishment of Home Rule will be a gradual process. As the Act is framed, it allows no Irish control over the Crown; no say in the making of peace or war; no influence over naval and military forces; no making of treaties with foreign States; no giving of titles and honours; there is to be no Irish interference with coinage, or, except at the express will of the people, no tampering with old-age pensions or national insurance or labour exchanges; while for a period of six years the Royal Irish Constabulary will remain under English jurisdiction. It should be obvious that the manner in which self-government will be conferred on Ireland is guarded to an extent that should satisfy the most fidgety English critics.

The Irish people will be asked to decide for themselves whether old age-pensions, the National Insurance Act, the labour exchanges, and the banks of the post office and friendly societies shall pass from the Government of the United Kingdom to the Government of Ireland. If such a resolution is passed by both Houses of the Irish Parliament it will take effect in one year, except in

the case of the banks, when a period of ten years is fixed before the big financial change shall come to pass.

Moreover, the very constitution of the Irish Parliament has been so arranged as to eliminate the possibility of hasty, drastic legislation. The Parliament that is to sit in Dublin will be composed of a Senate of forty members, and a House of Commons of 164 members. The senators will be nominated for the first term by the Lord-Lieutenant, who may reasonably be expected to choose men whose characters and whose records make them fitting leaders of the country. After the first term has elapsed, the members of the Senate will be elected, as members of the House of Commons are to be elected, according to the principles of proportional representation which will be introduced into the country.

While the second chamber will act as a necessary check, its constitution is not undemocratic. If it should happen that a Bill should be rejected by the Senate after it has been accepted by the House of Commons in two sessions, the Lord-Lieutenant will have the power to summon a joint sitting of Parliament, and the Bill will be declared passed if at such a sitting it secures a majority.

Irish representation in the Imperial Parliament will be reduced to forty-two. Unless it so happens in the meantime that the men of Ulster make the more perfect choice and of their own freewill accept the principles of self-government, an

Amending Bill yet to be passed will ensure the exclusion of the greater part of Ulster.

Thus you have a democratic form of government, but established with safeguards at every point. It is not necessary here to give the full details of the measure. I have alluded to the bare form of the Act because it shows how easily and slowly Ireland will be acclimatized to the great change that is coming. And it is surely the poorest kind of argument to suggest that in war-time vast internal changes are detrimental to the cause for which the Allies are fighting. The greatest change in modern history has been accomplished in war-time in Russia, and the Russians will fight and work for victory all the better because of it. France has changed her Governments again and again since the beginning of the war, and her enthusiasm has not suffered. The overthrow of the Asquith Government was followed by a better régime, as is admitted to-day by the very men who feared the appearance of national disunity that such an upheaval might cause. To change your horse in the middle of a stream may be a bad policy if your horse is perfect. But if you have any doubts about it at all, it is better to get a fresh steed than to risk not crossing the stream at all.

When this war at last comes to an end, there will be a thousand problems for the British Government to solve. It will indeed be long before England will remotely approach the England of

the spring of 1914. There will be less time than ever for the discussion of Irish affairs. It will be of the greatest possible help to legislators at Westminster, then concerned largely with Imperial problems, to have Irish affairs in the hands of the Irish. The time taken up in normal days in considerly purely Irish questions is enormous, and yet, from the point of view of Ireland, inadequate. Great economy of time will be needed when peace is declared. If the Government has to devote days to Irish discussions, if it has to give time to complicated Irish business, Imperial affairs will suffer, and Irish affairs will get no better. The British Government has everything to gain and nothing at all to lose by giving Ireland Home Rule to-day.

Ireland at the moment is politically in a state of suspended animation. The Government refuses to recognize her claim to existence as a self-governing nation; it even refuses to recognize her as part of the United Kingdom, and makes plain that refusal by carefully excluding Ireland from the operation of nearly all war measures. The country is indeed scarcely governed at all. The opinions of its alleged representatives in the House of Commons carry little if any weight. Martial law has taken the place of the normal administration of justice, and the Department of Agriculture is almost the only part of the administrative machinery which is working in the ordinary fashion.

When the great peace conference comes, the eyes of the world will be on England. They will see an England that has victoriously, but always under the laws of humanity, won the long fight. They will see the glory of her dominions, the splendid unity of her peoples. But what sort of a picture will they see of Ireland? There are two pictures that flash before the eye at the moment. There is the picture of an Ireland put aside again and again like a naughty child, an Ireland unhappy and humiliated and rebellious, an Ireland very lonely and very aloof from the little lands like Serbia and Belgium and Montenegro, whose rights will be proudly vindicated. The eyes of the world may see an Ireland looking pitifully towards America for justice. . . .

But there is another picture. I seem to see a new Ireland in the days that are at hand, an Ireland making its own just rules and laws on the sure foundation of the will of the people, an Ireland gloriously happy in the free expression of her nationhood, recreating, rebuilding, remaking the country, looking towards England after all the centuries as indeed the Motherland.

If you should doubt that these things may come to pass, I would ask you to consider the Irish in the Dominions. Throughout the Empire, except in South Africa, the Irish are helping in their thousands to build up the nations of tomorrow. They have helped to make Canada; they are making Australia and New Zealand.

Under a system that is just and wise and democratic the Irish have always lived in peace and content, playing their parts as individuals in a mighty land with intense loyalty and in the most perfect order.

And if these things are happening in far-off lands, why should they not happen in Ireland itself? The Irish as exiles have done great things; they will achieve still greater things in the more splendid freedom of their beloved land.

The darkness is lifting. During all the years it has been the Irish way to look to the west for the dawn. But in these latter days very many in Ireland have begun to perceive that the light comes not from the west, where is America, but from the east, where is England. They have watched with an increasing hope, a hope that is not shattered even by the shells that burst in Dublin at the Easter of 1916. Their hope has grown into faith, and faith has taught them no small measure of charity. They stand expectant, looking to us across the narrow seas.

It is our right, our duty, and our most happy privilege so to act that they shall not be disappointed of their hope.

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